

THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

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LETTERS OF CHARLES DICKENS TO BARONESS BURDETT-COUTTS.

EDITED BY CHARLES C. OSBORNE.

IV.

THE references to the death and funeral of the Duke of Wellington explain themselves.

The reference to Westminster can only refer to the great religious and educational work Miss Burdett-Coutts had undertaken in that part of the ancient City adjoining Vincent Square. St. Stephen's Church (V. *ante* Dec. 14, 1841) had been consecrated June 24, 1850, when the altar-cloth was given by the Duke of Wellington, who also presented to the church a sixteenth-century silk curtain taken from the tent of Tippoo Sahib at the storming of Seringapatam. The schools for boys and girls adjoined St. Stephen's Church, and contained a large picture by Marshall Claxton (1813-81), of Christ blessing little children.

'DOVER,

'Tuesday Night, Fourteenth September, 1852.

'I have just heard of what you will have been long prepared for, but what I fear will cause you, notwithstanding, some natural distress. I was walking to Walmer this afternoon, and little thought that the great old man was dying or dead. He had been a steady friend to an uncle of Mrs. Dickens who was Colonel of Engineers here; and his son left word a little while ago, while we were at dinner, that the Duke was dead.

'I believe that what you write about Westminster is the whole truth and force of that subject, and that there is no better way of doing good, or of preparing the great mass of mankind to think of the great doctrines of Our Saviour. If I were to try to tell you what I foresee from your lending your aid to what is so particularly and plainly Christian with no fear of mistake, your modest way of looking at what you do would scarcely believe me. But you will live to see what comes of it, and that will be—here—your great reward.

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'I felt, when I came back, that I had so much to do with *Bleak House* that it was not safe for me to contemplate doing nothing next Wednesday.'

The opinions expressed in the following letters regarding the Duke of Wellington's funeral were stated with equal cogency in articles in *Household Words*. These were followed by an article in the issue for November 27, 1852, entitled 'Trading in Death,' in which, after denouncing the barbarous show and expense of State funerals and all such customs, Dickens quoted a large number of advertisements which had appeared in *The Times* and other newspapers offering for sale seats to view the funeral, autograph letters, and locks of the Duke's hair. It was added that if all such advertisements that had appeared were collected they would fill an entire number of *Household Words*.

'DOVER,

'Thursday, Twenty-third September, 1852.

'The whole Public seems to me to have gone mad about the funeral of the Duke of Wellington. I think it a grievous thing—a relapse into semi-barbarous practices—an almost ludicrous contrast to the calm good sense and example of responsibility set by the Queen Dowager—a pernicious corruption of the popular mind, just beginning to awaken from the long dream of inconsistencies, monstrosities, horrors and ruinous expenses, that has beset all classes of society in connexion with Death—and a folly sure to miss its object and to be soon attended by a strong reaction on the memory of the illustrious man so *mis*respected.

'But to say anything about it now, or to hope to leaven with any grain of sense such a mass of wrong-doing, would be utterly useless. Afterwards, I shall try to present the sense of the case in *Household Words*. At present, I think I might as well whistle to the sea.'

'TAVISTOCK HOUSE,

'Third November, 1852.

'... I am quite vexed about the State Funeral. I think it is altogether wrong as regards the memory of the Duke, and at least equally wrong in the Court estimate it implies of the People. The nonsense of the Heralds' College and Lord Chamberlain absurdities, keep his own soldiers away; the only real links of sympathy the public could have found in it are carefully filed off; and a vulgar holiday, with a good deal of business for the thieves and the public houses, will be the chief result.'

'TAVISTOCK HOUSE,

'*Friday, Nineteenth November, 1852.*

' . . . In the matter of the Household Narrative, I think, on looking back to the previous numbers, that there is nothing to be done, as to the Duke's memory—unless there be anything that you would *like* to add about his character. If you will send me anything, of course I will take care to append it in the right place. I came home yesterday in time to write an article for the next No. of *Household Words*—which I had kept open for the purpose, and which is now at press, of necessity,—objecting to the whole State Funeral, and shewing why. I will send you a proof—to-morrow night, I hope—thinking you may like to read it. The military part of the show was very fine. If it had been an ordinary Funeral of a great commander, it might have been impressive. I suppose for forms of ugliness, horrible combinations of colour, hideous motion, and general failure, there never was such a work achieved as the Car.'

'TAVISTOCK HOUSE,

'*Thirtieth October, 1852.*

' . . . I went out yesterday to Fulham, and occasioned the most frightful consternation in Auckland Cottage by unexpectedly appearing in the rain. A large young family fled from the back parlour, on a visitor being announced, and took refuge (with their mother) at the top of the stairs—where they stood, as I saw from the passage, like so many Ostriches—with their heads hidden, but their legs plainly visible; and I think I never saw so many legs listening at once, as while I enquired for Mrs. Brayne. Being shewn into the vacated back parlor, I was there presently confronted by the wrong Mrs. Brayne, a muscular lady with very large bones, to whom I timidly intimated my profound conviction that she was not the ancient artist you had described to me. She replied, "No doubt it was her mother-in-law I wanted," and, withdrawing, sent in a little bright-eyed old lady in a grey and mulberry-colored knitted polka, whom I perceived to be the right Mrs. Brayne. She shewed me the copy. I apprehend there is not much choice of a frame, for it must be fitted in a case to shut up, or it would fade in no time; being a kind of work that will not bear much exposure to the light. I therefore advised her to make the gilt flat frame within the case something wider than usual, and pointed out to her another slight alteration in the usual measurement of such things, which increases the effect. The whole to be

fitted in a morocco case. This I settled she might proceed to do, after Tuesday, if in the meantime she heard nothing to the contrary. . . .

'I think of doing something about the Thames Police, and had some of the Toll-takers at Waterloo Bridge at the office yesterday to put some questions to them about their experience of suicide. Their answers were rather curious, almost all the attempts are by women—a man, quite a rarity.'

The Mr. Stone who was described as hovering with satisfaction round the photograph of Dickens, was Frank Stone, A.R.A., a popular English painter in both water-colours and oils (1800-59). He was a friend of Dickens, and one of the four artists (including Augustus Egg, John Leech, and George Cruikshank) associated with amateur theatrical performances given for charitable purposes by Dickens in Manchester and Liverpool in 1847. As the net receipts fell short by £100 of the sum it was desired to raise, Dickens proposed to increase the benefit fund by the publication of a little *jeu d'esprit*, in the form of a history of the trip, with illustrations by the four artists, written by Mrs. Gamp (as an eye-witness), inscribed to Mrs. Harris, and edited by Charles Dickens. It was to be a new 'Piljam's Projiss.' The project, alas! was not realised, as the artists did not respond, but there is a delightfully amusing fragment of the letterpress by Dickens, given in the sixth book of Forster's *Life*, including the following friendly caricature of Stone and Egg: 'There,' he says, alluding to a fine-looking, portly gentleman, with a face like an amiable full moon, and a short, mild gentleman, with a pleasant smile, 'is two more of our artists, Mrs. G., well beknowed at the Royal Academy, as sure as stones is stones and eggs is eggs.' Mr. Frank Stone was the father of Marcus Stone, R.A.

'Christmas Day, 1852.

' . . . I cannot resist the temptation I feel to send you the result of the interview between myself and the sun. I am so anxious that you should like it if you can. It came home last night, and Mr. Stone has been prowling about it and hovering round it this morning with such intense satisfaction, that I suppose it must have something good in it. I don't pretend to such a knowledge of my own face, as I claim to have of other people's faces.'

Mrs. Warner (1804-54) was Mary Amelia Huddart, the daughter of a Dublin chemist. After a distinguished career on the stage, she was stricken with cancer, and became a hopeless invalid. She had married Robert William Warner, the landlord of the Wrekin

Tavern, Broad Court, Bow Street, a place of resort for actors and literary men. In 1853, partly through the fault of her husband, she went through the insolvency court. A fund, to which Queen Victoria and Miss Burdett-Coutts contributed, was raised, and a benefit performance at Sadlers' Wells brought her £150.

'BOULOGNE, CHÂTEAU DES MOULINEAUX,

'Wednesday, Twentieth July, 1853.

'I dare say you can easily call to mind Mrs. Warner, the actress. Will you read the enclosed portion of a note I received (in a parcel from London) from Mr. Macready, only this morning. It is just within the bounds of possibility that you may have some power of nomination somewhere, that might be well bestowed on such a case. But I need not say (of all people) that I know what a slender chance there is of such a thing.'

In acknowledging the sum sent to him for Mrs. Warner's benefit, Macready, writing to Miss Burdett-Coutts from Sherborne on July 23, 1853, said :

'You will, I trust, dear Madam, excuse me for this departure from the ceremonious terms, in which I ought perhaps to acknowledge the letter I have just received from you : but, under the feelings it has excited in me, I really cannot restrict myself to that cold formality, which is ordinarily considered the language of respect. I would wish you to believe, how deeply I have been affected by your goodness, and how truly I honor that genuine benevolence, so ready in you to anticipate affliction's prayer. But in your own consciousness you have your own recompense, and that, which is due to the most faithful stewardship of the Almighty's earthly blessings must be yours.

'I shall by this same post convey to Mrs. Warner the consolation of your letter, and I can well judge, what must be her emotions of gratitude to you, and also to our excellent friend, Mr. Charles Dickens, for his kind mediation in her favor.

'There are three or four answers, for which I am waiting, before I make up the arrangements for the completion of the girl's education ; but in the meantime she will return to school, and in due course, I will, with your permission, forward you the account of what has been, and is proposed to be, done.

'I shall probably hear either from yourself, or through Mr. Dickens, of your final decision in regard to the boy : in the meantime, regretting that I can but so imperfectly express the senti-

ments of grateful respect, with which I am penetrated by your goodness, I remain, dear Madam,

‘Yours most faithfully.’

The book which Dickens had just finished was *Bleak House*.

‘BOULOGNE,

‘*Saturday, Twenty-seventh August, 1853.*

‘. . . I have just finished my book (very prettily indeed, I hope) and am in the first drowsy lassitude of having done so. I should be lying in the sunshine by the hour together, if there were such a thing. In its absence I prow about in the wind and rain. Last night was the most tremendous I ever heard for a storm of both. I fear there will be sad shipwrecks in the newspapers a few days hence.

‘. . . The Birmingham people are arranging those readings I promised to give them. They expect to get five hundred pounds for their new Institution (a splendid idea of a Mechanics’ Athenæum) therefrom. I am going to read there three nights in the Christmas week—to two thousand working people only, on the Friday—the *Christmas Carol*. You heard the beginning of *Bleak House*. I wish (and did wish very heartily) you had been here the night before last, to hear the end.’

It may be remembered that Dr. and Mrs. Brown (Miss Meredith) lived next door to the Baroness at 80 Piccadilly.

‘OFFICE OF *HOUSEHOLD WORDS*, 16 WELLINGTON STREET NORTH.

‘*Friday, Eighth September, 1853.*

‘Your account of Vichy gave me a chill from which I have not yet quite recovered. A dim oppressive sense of windy discomfort has been upon me ever since, and I feel inclined to try to warm myself at a bright hard-hearted little fireplace which produces nothing but smoke. . . . I passed your house yesterday, and it looked tremendously dull—if that is any comfort to you. Painters were at work in Mr. Brown’s, and a man on a tall thin pair of steps much spotted with whitewash was at work in the middle window of the dining-room, according to the usual manner of that class of operative—scraping a little, looking about him a great deal, and singing the dreariest song I ever heard. I suppose that part of London never was so empty. In search of two or three little things I wanted for my trip, I went to one of the tailors who lives in Piccadilly. He couldn’t bear the silence and had gone to

Brighton. I went to another of my tailors who lives in Clifford Street, Bond Street. He had given up business altogether, for the time, and was playing the piano upstairs, surrounded by his family and mignonette boxes. I then went to my hosier's in New Bond Street, and found the establishment reduced to two of the least illustrious of the "young men," who were playing at draughts in the back counting-house. This is really the experience of a solitary traveller in those regions at eleven o'clock yesterday forenoon.'

The letter which follows suggests how active a part Dickens was taking in the philanthropic work of Miss Burdett-Coutts during the years before she secured the services of Mr. Wills as her private secretary.

'1 JUNCTION PARADE, BRIGHTON,

'Friday, Fourth October, 1853.

'1st Case :—Mr. Burgess is a common begging-letter writer—Fourpost bedstead in his room—admirable steak on the fire—handsome wife—two extraordinarily jovial children—shelves, full of glasses, crockery ware, children's toys, etc., etc.—cupboard full of provender—coals in stock—everything particularly cheerful and cosey. It was such a clear case (he was not at home himself; I think must have stepped out to fetch the beer) that I caused enquiry to be made of the Mendicity Society. They know him well, and will send me down a report of his life and career to-morrow.

'2nd Case :—The lady at Holloway was with her sick husband. Everything scrupulously clean—except the husband. They were in a back parlor, very briefly furnished. She has two additional pupils in her little school, and one other private pupil. They have got on up to the present time, but are again so pressed by those small creditors that certain friends of hers have determined in their small way to assist her husband with the few pounds necessary to pay the expenses of taking the benefit of the Insolvent Act. They deplored this with much apparent sincerity, saying that all the creditors, except the baker, were very little tradesmen who would suffer by the loss. They estimate their debts at £50. They were very hopeful and quiet—complained of nothing—asked for nothing—and said that on the whole their creditors had been very patient and considerate.

'3rd Case :—I have written a note of enquiry to Mr. Greenhow at Newcastle, and shall probably receive his answer to-morrow.'

Augustus Leopold Egg (1816-63) was a well-known genre painter of the time. The other member of the Italian Triumvirate was Wilkie Collins.

Miss Burdett-Coutts was evidently staying in Paris, where 'Dickens & Co.' were to dine with her on their way to Strasburg.

'O' was Mrs. Brown.

'BOULOGNE,

'*Saturday, Eighth October, 1853.*

' . . . As you kindly contemplate the invasion of your table by the whole Italian Triumvirate, and as I know you will find Mr. Egg very modest and agreeable, I think I ought to give "Co" the great pleasure you so considerably offer that part of the Firm, as well as "Self." But as we shall not be presentable by your dinner hour on Monday, and as we shall not go on to Strasburgh until Wednesday morning, I would propose, if you approve, that we dine with you on *Tuesday*.

' . . . I have a game to show you, which will interest you if you never saw it. We have been playing it here of an evening, with the greatest success, I think it will put our friend O (if you will say as much to her from me) on the alert.'

The gentleman with whom the Italian Triumvirate spent two days was the Reverend Chauncey Hare Townshend (1798-1868), but it has not been possible to identify the prince. In his youth Mr. Townshend had pretensions to being a poet, and in 1817, while at Cambridge, won the Chancellor's Medal for a poem entitled 'Jerusalem.' He published a volume of poems in 1821, and was the author of other works. An inimitable description of him in his old age is given in Dickens's letter of August 13, 1856.

By his will Mr. Townshend left his pictures, scientific collections and a magnificent collection of gems, to the National, now the Victoria and Albert Museum, and a large sum of money to Miss Burdett-Coutts for the furtherance of elementary education. Out of this fund was built the Chauncey Hare Townshend Schools, opened in Rochester Street, Westminster, in 1876. He was one of the dearest friends of Dickens for many years; and when *Great Expectations*, which had appeared as a serial in *All the Year Round*, was issued in book form in 1861, it was inscribed 'To Chauncey Hare Townshend.' On hearing of his death Dickens wrote: 'I truly loved him . . . I never, never, never was better loved by man than I was by him—Good, affectionate, gentle nature.' Townshend, in his will, charged Dickens 'to publish without alteration his religious opinions, which he sincerely believed would tend to the happiness of mankind.' In a letter dated January 4, 1869,

Dickens explains that to publish without alteration was absolutely impossible, because the opinions were distributed in the strangest fragments through the strangest notebooks, pocket-books, slips of paper, and what not. Notwithstanding these difficulties, Dickens published Mr. Townshend's religious opinions with an explanatory introduction in 1869. It has not been possible to ascertain that they have been conducive to the happiness of mankind.

'HOTEL DE LA VILLA, MILAN,

'*Tuesday, Twenty-fifth October, 1853.*

'When I came to reflect at leisure on what the Prince had said at dinner, I felt convinced that he must be under some complicated (and I had almost added here, peculiarly Parisian) mistake. Firstly, because travellers crossing the Simplon enter Italy by the Sardinian state, and secondly because travellers crossing the St. Gothard not only come direct from the obnoxious Swiss Canton—which in the other case they do not—but enter Italy at once by an Austrian portal. When I got to Lausanne I made enquiries whether Austria interposed any difficulties in the way of English travellers entering Italy by the Simplon. Nobody knew, or had ever heard of any such thing. The *Courier of the Mail*, who had just come across, utterly rejected the idea; saying that they took passengers, and passed and met travelling carriages, every day. Thus confirmed, I resolved to come by the Simplon—and did. We crossed it on Sunday, when there was not a cloud in the sky, and when the most sublime Sunday service the mind can well imagine pervaded the tremendous silence and grandeur of the whole distance. That night we lay at Domo D'Ossola, and yesterday we came on here. Both at the Austrian frontier and at the gate of Milan we were received with the greatest politeness and consideration. I am bound to say that I never knew the usual Passport and Custom-House regulations more obligingly enforced. So here we are.

'We stayed two days with Townshend very pleasantly indeed, and I had the gratification of receiving your note with the Prince's kind enclosure—for which pray thank him in my name—and also of further hearing of you from our host himself, who beamed "like one entire and perfect" soft smile when he produced your handwriting. My old Lausanne friends were all so cordially happy to see me that I felt half-ashamed of myself for being liked so much beyond my deserts. Our stay there disposed of, we went on to Geneva and so to Chamounix, which, at this time of the year—no visitors, the hotels shutting up, and all the people who can

afford it going away—is far more primitive and interesting than as one usually sees it. We went up to the Mer de Glace through pretty deep snow, warmed ourselves at a wood fire on the ice, came down again and stayed a day in the valley, left Mont Blanc at seven in the morning just reddened on its utmost height by the sun and without a cloud upon it, and crossed to Martigny. These achievements (with a variety of gymnastic exercises with a pole, super-added) I performed on foot, to the infinite satisfaction of the Guides, who pronounced me “a strong Intrepid,” and were of opinion that I ought to ascend Mont Blanc next summer. I told them in return that it had become such a nuisance in my country that there was some idea of authorising Paxton to take it down and re-erect it at Sydenham.

‘We go on to Genoa by the mail to-morrow, where some more of my old friends expect me and are going to hold a small festival on the great occasion. I find my companions so unused to the notion of never going to bed, except in large towns, that Sicily is already erased from the trip, and Naples substituted for its utmost limit. We shall return too, for shortness, by the way of Paris—where I shall probably take up Charley about the 8th or 9th of December. If you should have leisure to write me a few lines within ten days or so—or say a week—after the receipt of this, Poste Restante Rome will find me. After that, Florence, after that, Venice, after that Genoa again, as we shall return by way of Marseilles.

‘It is so strange and like a dream to me, to hear the delicate Italian once again, and to recover the knowledge of (such as it is), which I almost thought I had lost. So beautiful too, to see the delightful sky again, and all the picturesque wonders of the country. And yet I am so restless to be [illegible]—and always shall be, I think, so long as I have any portion of time—that if I were to stay more than a week in any one city here, I believe I should be half-desperate to begin some new story!!!’

‘VILLA DES MOULINEAUX,

‘Wednesday, Thirteenth August, 1856.

‘. . . I crossed from Folkestone a week ago, and found Townshend on board, fastened up in his carriage, in a feeble wide-awake hat. It was rather windy, and the sea broke pretty heavily over the deck. With sick women lying among his wheels in various attitudes of despair, he looked like an ancient Briton of a weak

constitution—say Boadicea's father—in his war-chariot on the field of battle. I could not but mount the Royal Car, and I found it to be perforated in every direction with cupboards, containing every description of Physic, old brandy, East India Sherry, sandwiches, oranges, cordial waters, newspapers, pocket handkerchiefs, shawls, flannels, telescopes, compasses, repeaters (for ascertaining the hour in the dark), and finger-rings of great value. He was on his way to Lausanne, and he asked me the extraordinary question "how Mrs. Williams, the American Actress, kept her wig on?" I then perceived that mankind was to be in a conspiracy to believe that he wears his own hair.'

The references in the letter of November 13 are to Sir Henry Layard (archæologist, politician and diplomat), to a son of the Honourable Caroline Norton, and to Sir Thomas Emerson Tennent (1804-69), first baronet, traveller, barrister, politician and author.

'ROME,

'*Sunday Night, Thirteenth November, 1853.*

'... We came from Genoa to Naples—I ought rather to say, went—in the *Valetta* steamer, an English ship placed upon this route chiefly to convey the Overland India Mail from Malta to Marseilles, when it becomes due. Our countrymen and women, and the men and women of all other European regions, are so much attracted by the fame of this ship, that we found it when we went aboard, perfectly crammed. There were about forty passengers, without any berths, blankets, seats at dinner, or other accommodation in the way of eating, drinking, or sleeping—the whole having paid heavy first-class fares. The first night we lay on the planks on the deck, with thirty-seven unfortunates—of whom thirty-two declared all night that they would write to *The Times* in the morning. You never saw so ridiculous a scene. Insane attempts to make pillows of carpet bags, hat-boxes, and life-buoys—wild endeavours to screen ladies off with flags, which invariably fell down as soon as they had tied their heads up in extraordinary dimity machines taken out of reticules elaborately worked in worsted—and in the middle of the night a perfectly tropical rain which swept the whole ship clear in a minute and crowded us all together on the cabin stairs, where we remained all night; whenever any desperate creature came below, all tumbling down; and whenever any other desperate creature ascended to the deck, all tumbling up again. As a distinguished Englishman in my way, I became the brother of

all the officers in half an hour, and set off with them next day (we being detained at Leghorn four and twenty hours) to see Pisa, which expedition I made with the comfortable assurance that the *Valetta* could never go without us, while the Captain was in our company. He was so much affected by our sufferings that next night he put Mr. Collins and Mr. Egg in the store-room (opened for the occasion), where they slept on little dressers, with the pickles, spices, tea, fruits, and a very large double Glo'ster cheese in cut—the whole forming a combination of smells of which they were profoundly innocent after they had been there (it was under water too) five minutes, but which, to my senses, has left a general flavour of chandlery and grocery about them ever since. I was superbly lodged in the steward's cabin; that potentate sitting in an arm-chair all night, and resigning his bed (four feet and a half by one and a quarter) to me. It was very comfortable, though the Engine was under the pillow, and the wall extremely nervous, and the whole in a profuse perspiration of warm oil. At Naples, I found Layard—with whom we ascended Vesuvius in the sunlight and came down in the moonlight, very merrily. Talking of Italian, I *must* mention that Emerson Tennent and his family were of the party—they had been in the *Valetta*—and that he stopped the Expedition indignantly, a little way up the cone, to demand “a church” for his daughter. He meant a chair; but he persisted in, and insisted on, having “Una chiesa”—to the unspeakable amazement and consternation of the forty screeching vagabonds who formed our escort. My heart misgives me in relating this story even to you, for he wanted to turn his son out of his bed (and stranger still the son wanted to turn out too) when he heard of my lying on the deck. But we laughed about it so ridiculously afterwards, with Layard, that I can't help this little bit of treason.

‘There has been a wretched business with young Brinsley Norton (the youngest living son of that unhappy marriage) at Naples. He has recently turned Catholic and married a Peasant girl at Capri, who knows nothing about anything—shoes and hair brushes included—and whom he literally picked up off the beach. They told me about it at the Embassy. He had not been married a fortnight when I was there. One of the attachés had just seen him in his “Island home,” translating Longfellow's poems, which he is supposed not to understand in the least, into Neapolitan—of which he knows nothing—for the entertainment of his wife—who couldn't possibly comprehend a line under the most favourable circum-

stances. His brother is supposed to be going to marry a sister of the young lady's, and altogether it seems to be a most deplorable affair.

'It was very hot at Naples, and I have some highly ornamental marks of mosquito bites. The same men with the same instruments, were singing the same songs, to the same tunes, all along the seashore in the morning, as when I was there Nine years ago. Affairs with France looked queer, and the French Ambassador left while I was there, in high dudgeon. It made considerable talk. Verdi is still the rage. In a poor enough opera of his—very well done indeed, at San Carlo, there was a Prima Donna who I think will soon make a great success in England. Pompeii has greatly increased in interest of late years; several fine houses having been excavated, and one being left imperfectly dug out, with the ruined and broken roof still upon it—which gives a perfect and admirable idea of the process of destruction. Meanwhile Vesuvius looks on very peaceably—for the present.

'... I was amazed by the life and enterprise in Genoa, and the increase in the place since I lived there. If it goes on in the same way long, its old commercial greatness will be renewed again.

'I admit that they do not speak very clearly or sweetly about Milan and in that country; but they can if they choose, and they do choose when a stranger speaks to them. The language has a pleasant sound in my ears, however spoken almost, which no other has except my own.

'VILLA DU CAMP DE DROITE, BOULOGNE,

'*Thursday, Twenty-second June, 1854.*

'... You cannot think what a delightful cottage we have got. The rooms are larger than those in the old house, and there are more of them; but the oddities are almost as great, and the situation—on the top of this hill, instead of three parts down it—is most beautiful. We have a field behind the house, with a road of our own to the Column—unbounded air—capital garden—and all for five guineas a week. I anticipate shewing it to you some time in the autumn, with great pleasure. And there are a variety of ingenious devices in the Robinson Crusoe way effected by the undersigned (who I think has moved every article of furniture in the house, since Monday afternoon) which must be *studied*, to be appreciated.

'The camp is not a mile off, and I have been in terror lest I should hear the drums. I went over yesterday, to reconnoitre the

enemy. It is a very curious and picturesque scene. The 3 or 4,000 soldiers now here, are building mud huts thatched with straw, for the 50 or 60,000 who are to come. I should think there are about 1,000,000 trusses of straw piled up ready for use; and the 3 or 4,000 men (lazier than any men I ever saw) are constantly wheeling little barrows of earth about—containing twelve tablespoonfuls each, as nearly as I can estimate. Except that nobody is brisk, it looks like the opening of some capital French play.

‘Our children arrived on Tuesday by the London boat, in every stage and aspect of sea-sickness. When I saw them land (Sydney with an immense basket, and a Custom House Officer in a cocked hat much bigger than the child, looking into it), flight seemed the only course open to me. The Nurse was prostrate, and (generally speaking) was carried by the Baby instead of carrying him. That wonderful young creature was the admiration of the sternest Mariner aboard—which I never heard of a Suffolk Baby yet—in consequence of the gentleness with which he was perpetually looking out of a white basin and in the intervals of his paroxysms, pitying his family and attendants. They arrived after dark, with 27 packages, whereof 5 prodigious chests belonged to Mamy and Katy’s governess, who is a French woman and so small that I should have thought a hat-box might have contained her entire wardrobe. In the dead of night when we were all asleep, a vigilant Custom House Agent appeared with twenty-two of those picturesque but screeching women who look after the baggage. The hill being extremely steep, they had harnessed themselves with ropes to the twenty-seven packages. The Tremendous uproar is inconceivable.’

Mr. St George and his ‘infamous proceeding’ have passed into oblivion. The *Good-Natured Man* is one of Goldsmith’s comedies.

‘VILLA DU CAMP DE DROITE, BOULOGNE,

‘Thursday, Twenty-second June, 1854.

‘That is a most infamous proceeding on the part of Mr. St George. Those people who are so horribly charitable at other people’s expense, and who will commit any duplicity in furtherance of their object—which they call a good one—are among the worst of Impostors. The Bailiff in the *Good-Natured Man* says of his Follower, “he’s a good deal in need of assistance, and as I can’t afford to assist him myself I must get you to do it, Master.” Which seems to me, in comparison, a respectable thing.’

(To be continued.)

THE GREAT CHAM.

BY C. E. LAWRENCE.

AN EPISODE, HITHERTO UNRECORDED, IN THE LIFE OF
DR. JOHNSON.

CHARACTERS.

DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.	MRS. DESMOULINS.
DR. OLIVER GOLDSMITH.	MISS DESMOULINS, her
FRANK BARBER.	daughter.
ROBERT LEVETT.	MISS CARMICHAEL (Poll).
MRS. WILLIAMS (Anna).	A POOR WOMAN.

DR. JOHNSON'S room in what now is Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, on the seventeenth of March, 1766. Its appearance is characteristic of the man of mind, authority and untidiness whose personality at any rate is immortal. He is sitting at the table with books and papers, in slovenly dress; his bob-wig is burnt at the front and crooked on his head. His face shows the sadness habitual to its expression when he is alone and in thought. He rouses himself from reverie, dips his quill-pen into the ink-pot and writes, keeping his eyes close to the paper. Hodge, his cat, is, or ought to be, sitting in a chair.

(Enter, by the only door, FRANK BARBER, a young negro, the servant and protégé of JOHNSON. He stands within the entrance and grins.)

JOHNSON. Why this grinning intrusion, sir?

FRANK. Oh, ah, yes, sar. Dr. Goldsmith, sar.

JOHNSON. But why grin at the thought of Dr. Oliver Goldsmith, Frank?

FRANK. You see, sar. He so magnificent. He comes—all turkey-cock.

JOHNSON. This must be an important day for little Goldy. Request the doctor to enter, Frank; but take care to hide that grin. Great men must be treated with respect.

FRANK. Yes, sar. Oh yes, sar.

JOHNSON. And Dr. Goldsmith is a great man.

(Exit FRANK. JOHNSON rises and waits for his visitor. He gesticulates through the nervous affection he suffers from. He says to the cat: "Hodge, Puss! Puss!" But Hodge generally takes no notice.)

(Enter GOLDSMITH. He is violently magnificent in a plum-coloured coat and gold. He carries a book—and is magnificently important just now.)

These to you are days of moment, Goldy—Dr. Goldsmith.

GOLDSMITH. Yes, Dr. Johnson. Fortune makes promise of comfortable guineas and better kindness to come for the poor physician.

JOHNSON. And to me this is a sacred day.

GOLDSMITH. To you?

JOHNSON. On this day fourteen years ago my wife, my lovely Tetty, died; and never can I lose the thought of her—or desire to. She was an inspiration to me, and as an inspiration she can never leave me.

GOLDSMITH. I bow before the thought of your bereavement, Dr. Johnson.

JOHNSON. That is kind of you. (He offers his hand, which GOLDSMITH takes).

GOLDSMITH. But it is small compared with your generosity to others.

JOHNSON. What do you mean?

GOLDSMITH. I heard the voices of Mrs. Williams and Miss Carmichael; Mr. Levett too. They were loud.

JOHNSON. Quarrelling?

GOLDSMITH. By all accounts they do little else when you are not by.

JOHNSON. Poor things! I fear their lives are monotonous. They have little pleasure in their poverty. And an occasional quarrel appears to make them cheerful.

GOLDSMITH. It is good of you to help them.

JOHNSON. Nay, Dr. Goldsmith. It is as my wife would have wished.

GOLDSMITH. Mr. Boswell has remarked that you call them your Seraglio.

JOHNSON. That Scotch rogue has too sententious and ready a notebook for my talk and always takes my humours seriously. Mrs. Williams and the others are friendless. They bear their

privations with courage. And to what do I owe the honour of this visit?

GOLDSMITH. You may remember, Dr. Johnson, a year or more ago that you called upon me at my lodgings in Islington. You heard that I was in distress, and therefore came at once. You discovered a manuscript.

JOHNSON. I remember—the landlady, a raging termagant, and a bottle of port—

GOLDSMITH. Madeira, and of a particular bloom and fragrance because I was penniless.

JOHNSON. Ah, why are the tastes of the indigent frequently the most discerning?

GOLDSMITH. A pleasant subject for a coffee-house discussion, sir, or a thesis at Leyden. Possibly you will enlighten us on the theme when next we meet at the Mitre or the Club— But my present purpose, Dr. Johnson, is one of gratitude—to you, sir.

JOHNSON (*gruffly*). What?—what?

GOLDSMITH. The manuscript you took away and sold on my behalf for sixty pounds to Francis Newbery is to be published within these ten days. Here is the earliest copy. Will you accept it, sir, with all my thanks? (*He gives JOHNSON the book.*)

JOHNSON. This is most kind of you, Dr. Goldsmith. The earliest copy. Our Bozzy will be happy to hear of this, and make one of his notes about it.

GOLDSMITH. Not of my part in it, Dr. Johnson. Your Mr. Boswell has no love to spare for Dr. Goldsmith. His ear is Scotch and my poor humour Irish, and the two may not meet in sympathy. But no matter, my *Vicar* makes his bow to the world, and I thank you for helping him into life.

JOHNSON (*studying the book*). A new family has come to town. They will reside permanently in the hearts of readers. Dr. Primrose is a true Christian pastor and I remember, from the reading of the manuscript, your championing the poor folk in the prisons. It was well done, Dr. Goldsmith; and the *Vicar of Wakefield* will not die for many a day. He should outlive my Dictionary by centuries.

GOLDSMITH. Nay, sir. Such scholarship! But I rejoice to hear the expression of your approbation.

JOHNSON. I wonder—have you retained those passages, I recall, of the Whistonian controversy? It struck me that they were somewhat forced and weak.

GOLDSMITH. Weak, sir? No, sir. They were the necessary

comedy and humour. It does not prove well in a book of imagination to have no laughter to mend the seriousness. Hence the reason for Moses.

JOHNSON. Moses. The son. Yes, that too was weak.

GOLDSMITH. But, plague take me, Dr. Johnson; must everything that is amusing be weak?

JOHNSON. Too often, sir. Too often. But I commend your book, sir. Yes, I commend it with all my heart. It was admirably conceived and written.

GOLDSMITH (*rather blatantly*). And what does it matter if nobody commends it, so long as I am gratified?

JOHNSON. If you mean to say, sir, that praise is not as balm to an author's nostrils and that even flattery may not be enjoyed however extreme it be, then you are not a sufficient judge of human nature. Due praise is as salt to the literary life. But that does not mean that good counsel to counteract exaggerations is not valuable also.

GOLDSMITH. Sir, I called——

JOHNSON. And I thank you for your courtesy and your gift. I hold you as my friend, Dr. Goldsmith; but you must not object if in my admiration of your genius I venture upon a little kindly detraction.

GOLDSMITH. Humour is as necessary to literature as it is to life, sir.

JOHNSON. That may be so. But in literature and life, seriousness is the more necessary. Why, sir, would you have a parson clowning in a pulpit, making his flock roar with his japes and antics to mend his seriousness?

GOLDSMITH. That is not the point, Dr. Johnson.

JOHNSON. Come then, what is the point, sir? What is the point? It has concern with the humour of your book. Moses and the Whistonian controversy. We will put aside Moses, as not greatly mattering. I remember Moses but faintly.

GOLDSMITH. Sir, your pardon——

JOHNSON. He bought or sold green spectacles and rode upon a horse. Not greatly amusing, Dr. Goldsmith. But the Whistonian humour—you call it humour—offends. It offends against religion and morals, against serious thought; like the clergyman who would play tomfool in his sermon.

GOLDSMITH (*walking up and down in great agitation*). Read it again, sir. Read those pages again.

JOHNSON. I will, sir, though if they offend me I shall pass them by. Be not so agitated, my dear sir—my dear Goldy.

GOLDSMITH (*fussily*). My name, sir, is Goldsmith. My patronymic never was Goldy. I am a doctor of medicine and I have written books.

JOHNSON (*earnestly*). Is it necessary to remind me, sir, of your achievements? And if I called you as I did, it was as a mark of my admiration and regard for you. Do I not address Mr. Boswell as Bozzy, and Mr. Langton as Lanky? I pray your pardon, sir, if it be necessary, for regarding you in that friendly spirit; but (*with increasing earnestness*) when it comes to your declaring to me that your remarks on the Whistonian controversy in this book were humorous or witty, then I say, sir, that your intellect needs more enlightenment than I had supposed.

GOLDSMITH. That is enough, sir!

JOHNSON. Humour may be necessary to a book of romance, but it must be in keeping with the character of the book. To drag into a simple family history questions of human principle and propriety, questions of the higher philosophy—

GOLDSMITH (*interrupting*). I bid you good day, Dr. Johnson.

JOHNSON. But why, Dr. Goldsmith? Have I spoken too much?

GOLDSMITH. You have roared like a lion, sir.

JOHNSON. My little Goldy.

GOLDSMITH. Goldy again, sir! Shall I never be entitled to be spoken to with respect?

JOHNSON. Sir, you are presuming on your present importance. A loud manner does not impress any more than does a loud coat. You say that I roared like a lion, sir.

GOLDSMITH. You talked like a mountain, sir, in angry eruption.

JOHNSON. Then I crave your pardon, Dr. Goldsmith. Why, sir, are we to quarrel who have both of us known adversity and now are treated with some better kindness by fortune? And on this day, too; the anniversary of my dear Tetty's departure, when I wish to be gentle with all the world?

GOLDSMITH. Gentle, Dr. Johnson! Gentle! It would be easier for a tiger to be gentle.

JOHNSON. Come, Dr. Goldsmith, this is not forgiving, and, sir, it is not just. I was expressing a few observations upon the use or the abuse of humour in literature.

GOLDSMITH. At my expense, Dr. Johnson.

JOHNSON. And why not, sir? You have written a book and by so doing have challenged criticism. You have offered—nay you have given me your admirable book and I thank you for it—and, my dear sir, by doing so have invited me to express my opinion about it; and I did so. That is all.

GOLDSMITH. I appreciate your criticism, sir, on general grounds. I recognise your outstanding authority, but——

JOHNSON. 'But' is too frequently a mischievous conjunction, Dr. Goldsmith.

GOLDSMITH. Yet sufficient, it appears, to be interjected into any observations I may venture to utter.

JOHNSON. Meaning by that, sir?

GOLDSMITH. That only Dr. Johnson, the distinguished scholar and dictionary-maker, may say all that he pleases uninterruptedly.

JOHNSON. This is offensive, sir.

GOLDSMITH. But less offensive and less intentionally so than loud remarks about loud manners not impressing any more than a loud coat.

JOHNSON. What did I say, sir?

GOLDSMITH. A man may wear whatever coat he pleases so long as it is decent.

JOHNSON. Sir, you have mistaken an innocent observation.

GOLDSMITH. My ears were my witness, and this coat is my own.

JOHNSON. Dr. Goldsmith, I would not have had this difference with you, trivial as truly it is, for a thousand pounds. It is not for me, sir, who have no great partiality for fine feathers or over-clean linen, to make any observations on another's dress; but, sir——

GOLDSMITH. Mr. 'But' crowing again!

JOHNSON. Sir, let us meet elsewhere in a little while. You vex my impatience this morning immeasurably. You have done me a kindness, sir, by calling on me and by this gift, which I accept proudly; but everything I endeavour to say appears to be carefully misunderstood.

GOLDSMITH. Carefully?

JOHNSON (*kindling*). What I said about your humour in this book I meant. Your remarks about Whiston and his controversy appeared to me, when I read the manuscript, as thin, pointless, unnecessary——

GOLDSMITH. I bid you good morning!

JOHNSON (*louder*). Humour, sir, in fiction or in dramatic works should lighten with laughter the severely tragical——

GOLDSMITH. I go, Dr. Johnson.

JOHNSON (*still louder*). As Shakespeare showed us, and the immortal John Dryden. But when it takes the form of Christian polemics, touching the relations of humanity with its——

GOLDSMITH. Fiddlesticks!

JOHNSON (*booming*). It is out-licensing licence, taking liberties with the absurd, and bringing sincerity down to the level of the painted grin of a mountebank.

GOLDSMITH. You never will let anybody else speak!

(*Exit hurriedly. The slam of the door wakens JOHNSON to the facts and he shakes his hands in nervous despair. He is still in a wrath of thought, and the final departure has upset him. He stands for a while shaking his head and gesticulating, but then a kinder expression, telling of the rich warmth and charity of his heart, intervenes and he shows regret.*)

JOHNSON (*to himself*). Little Goldy! Sam Johnson, you are a knave. I didn't mean to bark at little Goldy or his loud coat.

(*He hears feet on the stairs and backs to stand before the fireplace; for he knows that what he playfully calls his 'Seraglio' is approaching the room.*)

(*Enter FRANK, leading on his arm the blind ANNA WILLIAMS. They are followed by POLL CARMICHAEL, MRS. DESMOULINS and her daughter, an awkward angular girl; then by a POOR WOMAN whom JOHNSON had very recently rescued from the starvation of the streets, and, lastly, ROBERT LEVETT, aged 64. These are the Doctor's pensioners inhabiting his house, and generally a peevish poor lot, ugly, sordid-looking and discontented. They sit on chairs about the room. FRANK retires to stand beside the door.*)

Why are you visiting me now? Is it—did you know—that on this day, fourteen years ago——

WILLIAMS. I have a complaint to make about that Mrs. Desmoulins.

JOHNSON. Then Heaven send us peace!

DESMOULINS. I said——

WILLIAMS (*sharply to DESMOULINS*). Wait until your betters have spoken.

DESMOULINS. And who——

JOHNSON. I think, dear ladies——

WILLIAMS. If you please, Dr. Johnson, as a born gentlewoman I am entitled to speak the first.

DESMOULINS. Gentlewoman! Ha ha! ha ha ha! (*Rather shrill laughter, while her daughter, seated beside her, giggles.*)

WILLIAMS. I am the daughter of a physician.

DESMOULINS. So am I!

WILLIAMS. Yes, on the wrong side of the blanket (*ironically*). Ha ha ha! Medicine a farthing a bottle. Quack, quack, quack!

DESMOULINS (*fiercely*). You vicious wretch! If you weren't blind I'd tear your eyes out.

JOHNSON. Ladies, ladies!

LEVETT. They've been going on like this all the morning. At last I said 'Let's go to you.'

JOHNSON. An ill-service to me, Mr. Levett. I was at work. Or rather I had been at work.

WILLIAMS. If I'm to occupy your house, Dr. Johnson, that woman and her ill-begot offspring must go from it.

DESMOULINS. Good! We stay. So you go. Quack, quack, quack! (*The daughter giggles.*)

WILLIAMS. If I'd not been blind I'd have gone at the first sight of you.

JOHNSON (*loudly*). I will have silence——

CARMICHAEL. Turn them both out, Dr. Johnson.

DESMOULINS. Yes, be sure and put your squeaky nose in, Poll Carmichael! No one can say you were born or bred a gentlewoman.

CARMICHAEL. As good as any of you! None of my ancestors were hanged for picking pockets.

WILLIAMS. No, they were hanged for worse offences.

JOHNSON (*calling*). Peace!

CARMICHAEL (*to DESMOULINS*). I'm sick of you and that blind slug who's for ever crawling, listening at keyholes, whispering evil about her betters——

WILLIAMS (*bitterly*). Meaning me, you cat?

DESMOULINS. Yes, Madame Mud.

JOHNSON. Ladies!

CARMICHAEL. Dr. Johnson, you meant kindness, I believe, in asking me to live under your roof; but with such trash as that dirtying the air this place is fouler than any Bridewell.

(JOHNSON turns to the fireplace with a gesture of despair.)

WILLIAMS. It's yourself that's a creeping and sneering poison!

DESMOULINS. Hark at Lady Worm. Ha! (*The daughter giggles.*)

WILLIAMS (*shrieking*). I'm blind or you wouldn't dare to insult me. And what kind of a man are you, Dr. Johnson, to let a poor blind woman be scratched into the gutter and screamed at?

JOHNSON (*turning to them and calling*). Women!

CARMICHAEL (*rudely*). Women yourself!

WILLIAMS (*rising*). Am I to be put down with the likes of these, Dr. Johnson?

DESMOULINS. Insulting me and this innocent child, with 'Women!'

WILLIAMS (*sitting again*). And I the distant cousin of a Welsh peer and a lady in all my prejudices.

LEVETT (*gruffly*). Let 'em go drown in the Fleet ditch, doctor! That 'll silence 'em!

CARMICHAEL (*to LEVETT*). And you whose wife was in prison for filching. We don't forget that!

JOHNSON. Miss Carmichael! Here is a brother in adversity—

CARMICHAEL. Why then does he want us to drown in the Fleet ditch? I bless my stars I've never fallen so low as some.

LEVETT. No! I—

JOHNSON. One at a time! And a little charity, I pray!

WILLIAMS. Yes, one at a time, and I'm the first.

DESMOULINS (*to MISS CARMICHAEL*). Poll! Let her speak, the old rat. Then you tell the truth about her; and after I'll tell the truth about—both of you, and gladly.

CARMICHAEL. No, you next, Mrs. Desmoulins. I'd like to say the last words, having the most cause.

JOHNSON. Now what is this trouble? Why can't we live together in peace and good-will?

WILLIAMS. The time has come, Dr. Johnson, when I must be removed from the contamination of these women.

CARMICHAEL. Women!

DESMOULINS. Hush, Poll!

WILLIAMS. 'Women' is the word for those who, having no born refinement, can take an offered kindness and scratch the hand that is generous to them.

JOHNSON. No, no, Mrs. Williams!

WILLIAMS. Pardon me, Dr. Johnson!

JOHNSON. But if they do scratch my hand I shall not complain.

WILLIAMS. It is my hand they scratch. It is I they abuse.

DESMOULINS (*to WILLIAMS*). What have you done for anyone through all your slimy life?

JOHNSON. Peace! Peace!

WILLIAMS. And now that I'm poor and blind, ageing through my troubles, they fasten on me, and vex and insult me like hens ravaging a——

DESMOULINS. Cockatrice! Ha ha! ha ha ha! (*The daughter giggles.*)

WILLIAMS. I have borne their vileness patiently since you brought them here, Dr. Johnson, and I think that the way you pick up gutter-filth and fling it on me is cruel.

DESMOULINS. Have you finished?

WILLIAMS. No, Desmoulins. Not with you. You are the worst of them.

DESMOULINS (*to her daughter*). Daughter, I'm sorry you must listen to this.

WILLIAMS. The worst for having possibly a little more show of breeding than the fat slut, Poll——

CARMICHAEL (*furious*). Now, I will—— (*She rises, but FRANK standing behind her seizes her and forces her back into her chair.*) Let me be, you scum of a nigger!

JOHNSON. Mrs. Williams——

WILLIAMS (*angrily*). And you let me be, Dr. Johnson! You have been ungenerous to me, a blind, poor, wronged woman——

LEVETT (*shouting*). Silence that ungrateful mouth!

DESMOULINS. I'll listen to no more of this.

CARMICHAEL. Nor I. Dr. Johnson, when you asked me to come here——

POOR WOMAN (*rising*). May I say a word? (*They look at her with some surprise for hitherto she has been subdued and submissive.*)

JOHNSON. Yes, dear madam.

POOR WOMAN (*she speaks gently and with simplicity and sincerity*). It is ten days since the Doctor brought me here. I was an outcast, penniless, starving. I was shivering wet on a doorstep by the Old Bailey.

JOHNSON. Nay, good lady!

POOR WOMAN. I wish to say it, please. Especially as they have spoken.

LEVETT. Yes, say it, poor woman. It will sweeten this house ; for words of kindness from woman's lips here are as rare as light in the street-lamps of Drury Lane.

DESMOULINS (*to the POOR WOMAN*). Talk, drab !

(JOHNSON *looks at her angrily.*)

POOR WOMAN. I have no right to protest against that—for it is true. In the beginning I also knew the shelter and kindness of a gentle home, but ill-fortune and foolishness lost me that and brought me to drift, not knowing the ruin I was speeding to. I wish no other woman to go through what I have gone through of pain, illness and want. Yet still I clung to life ; and glad of the shelter of a barrel or a ditch and willing—glad—to eat crusts which the dogs had left.

WILLIAMS. Must we ?

POOR WOMAN. I was in the last darkness of despair, starved, drenched with rain, weary even to the wish for death, when I heard a voice as out of a dream, say, 'Poor woman, come with me.' No man or woman had spoken to me like that before.

JOHNSON. And still you said, No.

POOR WOMAN. He lifted me up and carried me here : and here I have been for ten days which have helped me to renew life and to believe that once there could be—(*softly*)—Christ.

JOHNSON. Good madam ! I pray you !

LEVETT (*stoutly*). It is true. As we know. Many a forlorn London child and poor creature knows that.

POOR WOMAN. And now I must go again.

JOHNSON. Not to that life.

POOR WOMAN. I must go my own way, for even though that life may be as harsh as before, it will be easier for me, now I know there is gentleness in the world ; while if I stayed I might grow as ungrateful and—malicious, as these have shown themselves—

DESMOULINS (*angrily*). There speaks the dirt of the streets !

CARMICHAEL (*furiously*). For the likes of her to despise !

WILLIAMS (*fiercely to DESMOULINS and CARMICHAEL*). She is no worse than you. Sharks, both of you !

DESMOULINS (*pointing at WILLIAMS*). Who puts her dirty fingers into the teacups to see if they're full ?

CARMICHAEL. It is all the washing her fingers get ! Ha ha ! (*This is not laughter.*)

WILLIAMS (*shrieking*). Dr. Johnson ! They insult—

LEVETT (*also shouting*). Fleet ditch! Drown 'em! Drown 'em all.

(*Exit the POOR WOMAN.*)

(*Again JOHNSON has turned away in despair of them.*)

WILLIAMS (*rising and speaking to JOHNSON*). Shame on you! You invited me here in my blindness to comfort my declining years, and since those creatures followed there's been nothing but insolence from them and that half-man, Levett! Frank Barber, your arm!

LEVETT. Help her to go, Frank.

WILLIAMS (*obstinately*). Then I'll not go!

(*FRANK goes across to her and helps her. Exit MRS. WILLIAMS stiffly and angrily led by him.*)

DESMOULINS. And that's what you've brought us here for, Dr. Johnson.

JOHNSON. I have nothing to say.

LEVETT. Wretches! It would serve you well to starve and be homeless for a year.

CARMICHAEL. Who forced your wife to pick a pocket and get gaoled? (*Exit.*)

DESMOULINS. Sour Bob—the gaol-bird's leavings. Ha, ha, ha!

(*Exeunt DESMOULINS and her daughter, giggling.*)

JOHNSON. Where's that poor woman, Mr. Levett?

LEVETT. She is gone, Doctor.

JOHNSON. Go after her, good friend!

(*Exit LEVETT.*)

My Seraglio! Poor things! Poor things! (*He goes to the table and picks up the copy of the 'Vicar of Wakefield' left by GOLDSMITH.*) Little Goldy! I must make my peace with little Goldy. Roared at him—like a mountain in eruption. A tiger, a bear! (*He takes his three-cornered hat and a staff.*)

(*At that moment enter GOLDSMITH.*)

Ah! my old friend! I was going in search of you.

GOLDSMITH. I have come back, Dr. Johnson, because I was hasty. I beg you to pardon me.

JOHNSON. Nay, but I roared at you. I was vehement; a mountain belching forth flame; but—Dr. Goldsmith—

GOLDSMITH. Did you say Goldy, sir?

JOHNSON. Goldy, I wouldn't vex your spirit for the silver mines of Peru. You've a warm heart, my friend, and genius, as the world is discovering, and great as is your genius your heart is greater. Forgive me for that roaring.

GOLDSMITH. And forgive me, sir, for having taken what you said amiss. It ill becomes one who admires and reveres as all who know you do—

JOHNSON. All who know me? Who know me! My Seraglio! You think I am a thunderer, Dr. Goldsmith; a car of Juggernaut crushing the life out of my victims and opponents with my 'Why, sir!' and 'You don't see your way, sir.' The Seraglio know better. Before them Sam Johnson is as cowed and timid, it would seem, as a lame colt confronted by a herd of wrathful bulls. And what I said about humour in your book—

GOLDSMITH. Nay, 'tis forgotten; and indeed you were right!

JOHNSON (*positively*). Right, sir? No, sir! I went too far.

GOLDSMITH. The Whistonian controversy.

JOHNSON. I shall re-read it; and I foresee will mend my earlier judgment. It is well to suggest and to criticise, but who should know the better—a casual reader or the writer, the great writer, with his gifts?

GOLDSMITH. When you are that casual reader—

JOHNSON. Nay, Goldy, do not tempt me. It is so easy for Sam Johnson under the least contradiction to roar, and I know how it is to be roared at—like that colt, though with me the bulls wore women's dresses. Your hand, my friend (*they clasp hands*), and now I must go search for that poor woman. (*Exeunt.*)

CURTAIN.

MAUD.

A STORY OF THE MARCH TO THE RHINE.

BY H. M. RALEIGH.

I.

At the crest of the hill the Colonel reined in his chestnut, and sat for a while, a statuesque equestrian figure, looking down through the thin November mist towards the village of Cartignies au Bois—husks of houses left in ruins by the retreating Boche. A line of tall poplars over to his left marked the highroad to Avesnes, at one time, so it was said, the advanced headquarters of His Imperial Majesty Kaiser Wilhelm II, and before him, stretching down into the valley, lush-green meadows, willow-bordered, offered the rider an irresistible temptation to canter. The smoke from a chimney in the village reminded him that breakfast would be ready by now at the H.Q. mess, and he urged the chestnut forward down the slope. The Signalling Officer, who was also Mess President, always grouched if anybody, even the C.O., was late for meals, and though it was possible that the battalion might be left in peace for one more day, the regimental housework had to be done, and there would be no leisure for the Colonel until the afternoon. The Adjutant and Quartermaster between them would see to that, confound them! The chestnut wanted her breakfast too, and pressed forward eagerly at the touch of the rider's knee, only to check suddenly in her stride and pull back, quivering, on to her haunches. From somewhere miles away to the eastward sounded an ominous 'plonk,' like the twang of a giant bowstring, and a great shell came tearing through the air towards them with the noise of an express train. A dull, shattering thud and a muffled roar told that the projectile had burst in the soft soil close at hand, and the Colonel, stooping low in his saddle, was bombarded with falling clods of earth and small stones.

'By George,' he said to himself, wiping the mud out of his eyes with a khaki silk handkerchief, 'that was uncomfortably near. I wonder if there are any more coming.'

But no more shells came over, and the Colonel was to see no

more shots fired in anger; neither that day, nor the next, nor for many days after that. Down in Cartignies village the Adjutant, pestilent fellow, was waiting with one of his abominable pink message forms, the sight of which never failed to irritate the C.O.; but this time the missive bore no inconvenient orders from Brigade, no demand for senseless but overdue 'returns,' no instructions for an immediate move from comfortable billets. Only the news that the war was over, and that hostilities were to cease at eleven o'clock that morning.

Meanwhile the Colonel and his chestnut, ignorant of the tremendous tidings, were chasing a brindled cow across a meadow. The animal had been grazing peacefully, ten yards from the spot where now a thin wisp of acrid smoke rose from a gaping, circular rent in the green turf, and shying away from the detonation, had shambled clumsily and in panic terror across the Colonel's line of vision. She was a fine cow, in the pink of condition, and the Colonel hated with a deep and abiding hatred the condensed milk that was served out with the rations. Visions of fresh milk, fresh cream, and even—if the Pioneer Sergeant could knock together a churn—fresh butter, rose before his eyes in a compelling cloud, and dulled his perception of the fact that what he was about to do was certainly illegal. Later, as a sop to his conscience, he reminded himself that the cow, though originally French property, was probably without an owner, for the German army was in full retreat, leaving in its trail devastation and, apparently, an occasional brindled cow. He could not leave the poor beast to be chivied and harassed by camp-followers and hangers-on coming up in the wake of the victorious advance, and it was surely time, now that the end was in sight, that the front-line troops should enjoy some of the perquisites of war. The Colonel neatly rounded the animal up, made it fast with the chestnut's headrope, and led it in triumph down into the village of Cartignies au Bois. Loot? No, that was an ugly word, and the war had given birth to a better one.

'Hullo, old boy,' shouted the Colonel to the Senior Major, whom he met coming out of B Company's cookhouse. 'I've scrounged a cow.'

'God bless my soul!' exclaimed the Senior Major, adjusting his eyeglass. 'She's a beauty, isn't she? What are you going to do with her, Colonel?'

'Take her along with us, of course. I like cream with my porridge.'

'You've heard the war's over?'

'What? Is there any official news?'

'Message from Brigade half an hour ago. An armistice was signed this morning, and hostilities are to cease at eleven hours. Meanwhile, we're to stand fast. Pakenham showed me the order; he's been hunting for you all over the place. Full of zeal. I think he wants you to organise some spectacular celebration; parade the battalion in hollow square and burn an effigy of the Kaiser; something like that.'

'Hm,' said the Colonel. 'The men are a damn' sight too tired to celebrate. But I think a double issue of rum is indicated. You might tell the Quartermaster, will you?'

'I've spoken to him about it already, Colonel, but there's nothing doing. We've got miles ahead of our supplies, and there may even be a shortage of bully. There's no rum at all. Might just as well suggest giving the men crackers with their tea.'

'That's pretty sickening. We don't win a war every day. I suppose in London now the streets are running rivers of champagne. Well, it can't be helped. I'd better get along to the orderly room.'

'And the cow, Colonel?'

The captive was quietly cropping the grass at the side of the road, unmindful of happenings momentous in the history of the world. The Colonel passed the head-rope over to his Second-in-Command.

'Well, if we can't get rum, at least we can be sure of milk,' he said. 'Send her along to the transport lines for the time being. She can be taken on the strength unofficially.'

And he rode off down the street.

It was in this way that Maud—for as Maud she was known from that day forward—entered the service of His Majesty the King. God knows in whose service she had been before; that she was no masterless vagrant was proved by her fairness and fatness of flesh, and it may well have been that she had supplied the breakfast tables of German majors and colonels for many months past; but now she had joined the British Army—on the very day when the need for recruits evaporated—and henceforth must be shown on official returns by the Transport Officer as a 'pack animal.' Pakenham, the Adjutant, was dubious about her. He would be, for he had the official mind. He reminded the Colonel that Brigade had on several occasions in the past made a fuss about the unauthorised addition of surplus animals to the battalion transport.

'The Brigade can go to the devil,' said the Colonel irreverently. 'When we're getting a regular cream supply we'll ask the Brigadier to tea. Meanwhile, we must get hold of a competent cowherd. You'd better circularise the companies.'

There was not, on November 11, 1918, so much competition for the post of valet to Maud as there might have been on the previous day, for the war was now over, and the instinct of self-preservation no longer urged men on to seek 'a cushy job with the transport,' but one Private Muggleton, a farm labourer in civil life, offered himself and was accepted. In the meantime, others besides the Adjutant presumed to criticise the Colonel's venture. The Doctor, for instance, who came from Sydney, Ohio, was disposed to regard Maud as a sort of Horse of Troy.

'She don't look good to me,' he confessed. 'Maybe the Germans fed her T.N.T. and left her behind with a time-fuse in her tummy. I've kept a whole skin so far, the war's finished, and I'm sure hankering after my little old home way back in Ohio. That cow's liable to detonate most any minute; the way she looks at me gives me a prickly sensation in the seat of my pants. Why don't the Colonel have an engineer officer give her the once over and disconnect the fuse?'

But Maud remained, and by her gentle and obliging conduct easily won the doubters over to her side. She had, however, a narrow escape, as shall presently appear. As the day, that first of all Armistice Days, wore on, it became increasingly evident to the officers of Battalion Headquarters that at dinner in the evening the mess would have nothing stronger than tea with which to celebrate the victorious conclusion of the greatest war in history. There was no rum ration, the whisky supply had become exhausted five days ago, and the nearest Expeditionary Force Canteen was somewhere away back in the direction of Cambrai. And the irritating thought persistently recurred—in London folks must be celebrating as they had never celebrated before. At the Base, among the non-combatants, men who never in their lives had faced an artillery barrage, would revel that night in a barrage of popping champagne corks. Here there would be no celebration, and while London made riotous carnival, feasting on all manner of good things, the men who won the war would sit wearily down to a depressing meal of cold bully beef washed down with—God of Battles—stewed tea! It was a depressed little company that gathered for luncheon in the H.Q. mess.

'I've got a young brother on a course near Aldershot,' remarked the Signalling Officer gloomily. 'I bet he'll be hitting up the high spots in Town to-night. Still, I don't grudge him his fun. He's been out here two years, and only went home three weeks ago. What annoys me is that the blighters who have carefully kept on the safe side of the Channel all through the war should have the opportunity of drinking all the champagne in London to-night, while we, who have borne the burden and heat of the day, and provided them with the excuse for the biggest blind that has yet been known, must sit here with our tongues hanging out.'

'Perhaps it's just as well, Charles,' said the Adjutant. 'You'd get horribly drunk if you were in Town to-night, and make an exhibition of yourself, whereas a merciful absence of liquor will ensure for you a clear head and a steady hand to-morrow morning.'

'The worst of it is,' put in the Transport Officer, 'that the Base-wallahs and men in cushy jobs are stealing our thunder. They'll swagger about the town to-night in uniform, and the girls will be all over them. By the time we get home—if we ever do—the war will have been forgotten, and popular acclamation will be reserved for Badminton champions, film stars, tiddley-winks experts, and so on. When we reach England there'll be no flags, no bunting, no bubbly, no nothing, and the girls will simply stare at us in surprise and say, "Where on earth have *you* been all this time? Don't you know there's been a war on?" It's cruel 'ard.'

'You needn't worry,' said the Adjutant. 'It'll be many years before you see the white cliffs of Albion again. The Division's going to the Rhine.'

'What? Is that official?'

'More or less. The Staff Captain was pretty certain about it this morning; wanted the Quartermonger to put in a big indent for boots.'

'Mother of Moses!' murmured the Signalling Officer. 'That means we've got to walk, and my legs aren't meant to move. I ought to have been glued on to a neat little green-painted platform, with wheels at the four corners and a string to pull me along. Well, I shall ride the Colonel's cow.'

Conversation was interrupted at this moment by the arrival of Carruthers, Officer Commanding B Company, who put his head round the billet door. He appeared to be nursing some tremendous secret.

'Hullo, you bloated plutocrats,' he said. 'Got any whisky in your mess?'

'Not a drop. So you can come in and sit down.'

'Well, about this Armistice business. We've got to celebrate the outbreak of peace somehow, and I've made a discovery. The old man at our billet tells me—with some difficulty, for he cannot speak English and my French is halting—that buried in his front garden he has a secret dump of champagne; Heidsieck 1906. He interred the stuff when the brutal invader was first stamping over French territory, and he is willing to show me where it is and let me have all six dozen if I care to dig it up.'

'Six dozen!—Care to dig it up!' cried the Signalling Officer excitedly. 'Where is your shovel, your mattock? Why are you not at work? This is no time to sit and gossip, idling away the fleeting hours. Go to it, man; unearth the bubbly, and report to this office with the spoils on completion of your task.'

'Wait a bit,' said Carruthers. 'There is a price to be paid. My temporary landlord has cast covetous eyes on the C.O.'s cow, and is willing to exchange the champagne for the animal. Tit for tat. Mirthwater for Maud. So I thought, perhaps, sir,' turning to the Colonel, 'you might see your way to making a deal. I'll supply the digging party.'

Thus it came about that all that afternoon, while a working party of twenty men, assisted by the subalterns of 'B' Company in their shirt-sleeves, dug frantically in a cottage garden, the fate of Maud trembled in the balance. The old man's garden was well and truly dug up, and put into a fit state for winter sowing, but no champagne was brought to light. Either there never had been any, or the Boche had found it first. The edge, however, was taken off the general disappointment by the arrival at headquarters of a case of port, 'with the compliments of the G.O.C.,' and by the miraculous achievement of the Quartermaster, excellent man, in spiriting a special rum issue for the men out of the A.S.C. Thus was the first Armistice Day not suffered to pass unhonoured and unsung, and when, on the appearance of the post-prandial coffee in the headquarters mess, it was found that Maud had supplied a jugful of real cream, a holy peace, symbolic of the occasion, fell upon the assembled company.

'Gee, that was A1,' said the Doctor fervently. 'Good old Maud!'

II.

Hannibal invaded Italy with a herd of elephants. *Autres temps, autres mœurs*; the ——th Battalion of the ——shire Regiment invaded Germany with a cow. Two hundred and twenty miles they marched, in twenty days, and always at the end of the long, sinuous column came Maud, coaxed, comforted and cursed by her indefatigable batman, Private Muggleton. It was a notable achievement for an animal accustomed neither by nature nor by temperament to covering long distances upon rough roads at an average speed of three and a half miles an hour, and surely deserves as much recognition as Hannibal's elephants, which have at least found their way into the history books. But the Transport Officer was right. The great British public, always fickle in their affections, took small interest in an event that was dramatic, spectacular, and of profound historic significance—the march to the Rhine. Their thoughts were centred, now that the fighting was done, on demobilisation and the early removal of all the irksome restrictions imposed by 'Dora' and similar pieces of emergency legislation, and they could draw no thrill from the thought of a victorious British army, with drums beating and (literally) colours flying, marching through Belgium—a Belgium but newly relieved of the yoke of the invading enemy—into Germany to enforce the terms of peace. Perhaps only those who actually took part in it realised to the full the drama and romance of that march, for only they experienced the dumb gratitude of the Belgian peasants in every little village on the route, where pathetic triumphal arches offered a welcome to 'nos vaillants libérateurs,' and the Maire, dressed in his Sunday black and wearing the tricolour scarf of office, stood at the roadside as the dusty battalions thundered through; only they were able to hear at first hand the true story of the miseries and hardships of four years of enemy occupation; only they were privileged to see melt away before them the great German war machine that had set the world at defiance for so long. To these the march to the Rhine, with its kaleidoscope of emotions and its changing panorama of scenery, must always remain a vivid memory; yet it has been described by some regimental historians as 'a very pleasant walk.' How those historians have missed the glamour of that unforgettable experience!

Maud's regiment was kept waiting at Cartignies au Bois for over a fortnight before the order came through for the eastward

'trek' to begin. This delay was in accordance with the terms of the armistice, which provided for a clear start to be given to the retreating German armies; but the troops found it irksome, and restlessness was manifested in various ways. There was little evidence of an ardent desire on the part of the men to assist in the final humiliation of a beaten enemy, and some were disposed to envy those divisions which were to remain behind in what had been the war zone until the arrangements for demobilisation could be completed. Even the veterans who in the first fine flush of enthusiasm in 1914 had chalked up on the sides of railway trucks 'Non-stop to Berlin' seemed to have lost interest. The war was over, the glory had departed, and they wanted to go home. Among those who shared in this feeling of war-weariness and discontent was Private Muggleton, *valet-de-chambre* and personal attendant of Maud. On the morning of the day when the battalion was to begin its long march he presented himself before the Transport Officer with a request.

'Beg pardon, sir,' he said with some diffidence. 'Do I 'ave to walk all the way to Germany?'

'Of course,' replied his officer. 'There are no buses running, and as you see, the train service is temporarily suspended. Perhaps you'd like to ride the Colonel's mare?'

Private Muggleton blushed.

'No, sir,' he said. 'It's that cow, Maud. She don't look 'appy, sir. Been off 'er feed the last two days, she 'as, an' it seems as if something was worrying 'er. I don't think she'll stand the march.'

'Want to leave her behind, is that it?' asked the Transport Officer. 'But I thought you were devoted to her, Muggleton. You surely wouldn't dream of marching into Germany without her?'

'No, sir. I thought maybe you could sell 'er to one of these Frenchmen. My boss is keepin' my job open for me at 'ome, but if I don't get back soon one of them young chaps on the farm will be steppin' into my shoes, like. So I thought, beggin' your pardon, sir, if you could see your way—— The pain in me back's been chronic the last week,' he added, as an afterthought.

'Nonsense, Muggleton. Whether you go to Germany or not, Maud goes, and you wouldn't want her to go without you, would you? Why, you're the only one who understands her little ways. Get back to your work, and don't let me hear a word of this again.'

'Very good, sir,' said Private Muggleton, and returned to his duties.

'I'm not sure Muggleton isn't right,' remarked the Colonel, when the Transport Officer told him of the interview. 'It seems a shame to drag the poor beast all that distance, and she's not accustomed to long marches. Still, if she peters out I daresay we can find her a good home. Better take her along.'

There was a crisp tang in the morning air when the battalion, spick and span and polished, swung past the starting-point at the top of the village, headed by the drums and bugles. From all over the countryside came the sound of muffled explosions, as though the war were still in progress, for the R.E., assisted by German engineer officers, were setting off the land-mines sown, before the Armistice was signed, by the retreating enemy. The Colonel and the Adjutant sat astride their horses at the cross-roads, and watched the companies, followed by the transport, wheel out on the long trail. The men were singing lustily, and for the moment discontent seemed to have been forgotten.

'They're a splendid body of men,' mused the Colonel. 'In some ways it seems almost a pity the war couldn't have gone on a little longer. They'll be disbanded soon, and Lord knows what will happen to 'em then. Disciplined and organised, as they are now, they'll go anywhere and do anything. Throw 'em on their own resources, chuck 'em into the world without jobs, and you're asking for trouble. You know, Pakenham, it's been a bloody business, but on the whole it hasn't been such a bad old war.'

'Well, sir, I don't know,' said the Adjutant. 'It seems to me too many good fellows have been killed already. I think it's gone on long enough.'

'You're quite right. I'm glad it's all over. But I wish I could be sure that in ten years' time none of these men will be singing at the street corners. Holy smoke! Look at this!'

At the tail of the rearmost G.S. wagon came Maud, shambling amiably along as though she had not a care in the world. Beside her, an expression of patient resignation on his mobile features, walked Private Muggleton, the High Priest, his rifle slung over his left shoulder, and the cow's halter held lightly in his right hand. A large bell, obviously 'scrounged' from some farmhouse in the village, was suspended from the animal's neck by a stout strap and jangled discordantly as she walked. It was an astonishing spectacle.

'We've got her at the wrong end of the column,' the Colonel remarked. 'We ought to have touched up her horns with gold-leaf and made her march in front of the Drums as a mascot. She's going well for a start, anyway.'

The battalion's progress through a newly liberated Belgium was slow but steady. From village to village they passed, receiving always the same joyous welcome from a little knot of peasants gathered on the highroad, and hearing always the same mournful tale of privation, misery and forced labour during four years of enemy occupation. Each night was spent in comfortable billets, but there were no extras, such as eggs or chickens, to be purchased from the countryfolk, for distress was widespread, and relief measures were being organised by the Red Cross. In front of the palatial château of Oret, where battalion headquarters took up its aristocratic abode for a single night, there was a large fishpond, and the hopes of the Signalling Officer, a keen angler, rose high, only to be dashed by Madame la Baronne, who lived alone with her daughter in the big, red-brick barrack of a house.

'There are no fish, monsieur,' she said sadly. '*Les officiers allemands*, they came with bombs. The detonations were terrific.'

'Unsportsmanlike swine,' said the Signalling Officer. 'They might at least have fished like gentlemen.'

A staunch patriot, Madame la Baronne. She described how, during the German occupation, she used to take her daughter to school in Brussels. 'Education must proceed, monsieur, war or no war.' For permission to travel she was forced to apply to the German officials, who for obvious reasons were trying their utmost to accentuate the racial division between the Flemish and Walloon sections of the people.

'Êtes-vous flamand ou vallon?' the officials would ask brusquely.

'Je suis *belge*, monsieur,' Madame would reply.

The exasperated officials would repeat the question, this time more emphatically.

'Êtes-vous flamand ou vallon?'

'Je suis *belge*, monsieur,' came back the answer with increased firmness, and nothing would induce the stout-hearted old lady to vary her reply, though Prussian officialdom might storm and rave and utter dire threats. She was a Belgian, and racial differences were dissolved in the face of a common enemy.

In another village, near the banks of the River Meuse, the

officers of battalion headquarters found themselves the guests of the Maire, a Belgian *avocat* of good birth and education, whose brother, a Cabinet Minister of repute, had perished in a German prison. He produced at dinner that evening a couple of bottles of excellent Chambertin, successfully kept hidden from the invaders all these four years, and, his tongue loosened by the friendly wine, spoke of horrors, real or imagined. There had been many civilians shot in those parts; one in his own village, and at Dinant, some miles to the south, there had been a veritable massacre. But what would you? There were *francs-tireurs*; he admitted it; and it is not pleasant to see your comrade shot in the back by a skulking civilian hidden in a cottage thatch. Was it fair to blame the Germans because they took reprisals for an act that violated the rules of civilised warfare? Loot—ah, that was another matter. Nothing could excuse barefaced robbery and the wholesale theft of private property. And many of his friends' valuables had been taken, much of his own had been wantonly destroyed. Would the officers look at that picture-frame on the wall? Perhaps they had already noticed it. The canvas had been neatly cut out, and a rectangle of unusually hideous wall-paper filled the gap.

'No,' said the *avocat* slyly. 'That was not done by the Germans. I anticipated them. Wait a moment.'

From the cache under the boards whence he had taken the Chambertin he drew out a long scroll of canvas and unrolled it. It was the missing oil-painting.

'That,' said the lawyer, 'is worth many thousands of francs. I have saved it. Others were not so fortunate.'

'But tell us, monsieur,' urged the Adjutant, 'what happened at the beginning, when the Germans arrived?'

'Ah, that. They swaggered into the village, those soldiers, boastful of their victory, hectoring in their attitude to us civilians, but with it all pathetically ignorant. They were drunk, but not with wine; only with the strong waters of excitement and the lust of conquest. "To-morrow," they cried, pointing to the River Meuse, "we cross the Seine and recapture Paris. France will then be humbled in the dust."—"And then?" I demanded.—"Then we conquer England."—"And then?"—"Ach, then we tackle America." But they gave us a bad fright at first. A *franc-tireur* was caught in the village, and the Germans rounded up us men and locked us all in the church. I feared we were done for, for I had heard of the executions at Dinant, but after a while they

thought better of it and let us out. The *franc-tireur* was shot, however. After that we were left in peace, though subject always to irritating restrictions and abominable interference with our liberty.'

So the march continued, through the mountainous, wooded country of the Ardennes, where the road ran like a winding ribbon along the sides of steep valleys, past splashing waterfalls and under beetling cliffs of solid rock, up to the point where black and white striped posts at the roadside marked the frontier of Germany. And with the battalion went Maud, petted all the way by the soldiers, and garlanded, like a sacred Hindu cow, by the civilians. She deserved the honour, for by some miracle she contrived to keep up the supply of milk for the H.Q. mess, and Private Muggleton was astounded to find how gamely she could struggle on through the most exacting march.

'You ain't a cow,' he said to her one day. 'You're a ruddy camel. Live on your 'ump for years and years, you could, if you was put to it.'

With the rest of the battalion he was very far from suspecting the truth: that Maud was nearly at the end of her strength. The cowed and obsequious German civilians who stood on the pavements in the little town of Malmédy, just across the frontier, and watched the tired troops of the victorious army swinging along the unfamiliar streets on the way to their billets, could not guess at the hidden springs of obstinacy which urged Maud to keep going until she reached her last grazing-ground on the banks of the turbulent Rhine. From Malmédy onwards the weather was bitterly cold, for Christmas was fast approaching, and for part of the way snow lay inches deep upon the ground, and the road ran through the fir-tree fairyland of Hans Andersen and Grimm. And still Maud plodded on, in the wake of the battalion transport, never failing to render her daily offering of fresh milk to the Commanding Officer's table.

One day, towards the end of the journey, the battalion halted for a night in a small village some thirty miles to the west of Cologne. At the door of the H.Q. mess the Colonel was greeted by a stalwart, smiling youth in rude corduroys and wearing the ribbon of the Iron Cross. He was the owner of the house, he explained in broken English, and had served as an officer in the German heavy artillery. Now he was a civilian and a free man once more, for he had demobilised himself as his battery passed through the village, and

for his part he wished to let bygones be bygones and forget all the agony and horror of the last four years. A strange, unaccountable impulse prompted the Colonel to ask him where his battery was situated on November 11. The ex-officer thought for a moment and then gave particulars.

'You were in action early that morning?'

'Ja, mein Herr.'

'What was your target?'

'We were shooting,' said the officer, 'at a little village called Cartignies au Bois, but I think our shells were going over. We ceased fire at about nine o'clock, and never fired another shot.'

Before the astonished eyes of the German the Colonel executed a *pas seul* on the doorstep.

'Great Scott, man!' he cried. 'Do you know that your last shell nearly killed me? It burst in a field five yards to my right, and covered me with earth. We must certainly have a drink together, you and I. You have done me a great service.'

The ex-officer stared at him with unwinking stolidity.

'Your pardon, *mein Herr*,' he said slowly. 'I do not understand.'

That evening, in spite of the stringent orders against fraternisation, the German gunner officer dined with the H.Q. mess as the guest of the Colonel. When he ordered his gun team to fire its last shot in the war, and the great shell tore shrieking up through the November mist, he had no idea that it would be the means of sending Maud shambling into the Colonel's life; but the mess were duly grateful, and ex-Leutnant Doebermann stumbled up to bed that night a little unsteady on his feet, and brimming over with feelings of friendliness towards humanity in general and the English in particular.

'Quite a nice fellow, that,' commented the Colonel after his guest had departed. 'I suppose a great many of them were, when you got to know them.'

'Yes,' said the Signalling Officer, 'but they were damned unpleasant at long range. Anybody feel like a spot more coffee? There's a drop of cream left.'

The end of the journey came two days before Christmas, and found the battalion in comfortable billets in and around the little town of Brühl, a few miles distant from Cologne. The companies were scattered, but a home was allotted to battalion headquarters in a luxurious *Schloss* on the outskirts of the town itself, a great

barrack of a place, with a certain meretricious grandeur, and surrounded by spacious though ill-kept grounds. The owner was a wealthy champagne merchant named Gessler, who was even now dying of consumption in an attic at the top of the house, attended by a solitary manservant of forbidding aspect. Attached to the *Schloss* were stables—relic of more prosperous, pre-war days—and here, since the transport lines were some distance away, the headquarters officers' chargers were installed. Here also came Maud.

'By the way, Colonel,' said the Adjutant at dinner that evening in Herr Gessler's big dining-room. 'What are you going to do with that cow when we go home? You can't very well take her with you.'

'I really don't know,' answered the C.O. 'I don't like to let the Germans have her; it would seem an act of treachery. I think perhaps it would be better to have her painlessly destroyed. But I fancy we shall be here for some time yet.'

The problem was solved that very night, but not by any human veterinary surgeon. Maud's gallant spirit had urged her weary frame along the road until she reached the promised land; now, her task accomplished, she could sing her nunc dimittis. Her homeland, the green pastures where she had gambolled as a tiny calf, had been trodden for four years under the desecrating heel of the invader; now she had marched, in the van of a great army, on to foreign soil to witness with her own eyes the humiliation of her enemy. It was enough. She passed peacefully out in the middle of the night, and when, next morning, Private Muggleton entered her stall, he found her lying stretched out in the straw, stone-dead, with a look of ineffable tranquillity upon her placid countenance. In a sheltered corner of the *Schloss* grounds there is a grass-covered mound surmounted—unless the Germans have removed it—by a stone tablet bearing this inscription:

In Grateful Memory Of

MAUD

A True Daughter Of France And

Faithful Servant Of His Majesty

King George V.

Died In The Service Of

The Allied Armies

Dec. 23rd, 1918.

R.I.P.

THE SEWING MACHINE.

BY CHRISTINE DOUGLAS.

'He who accepts a gift pays for it twice over.'

—Chinese proverb.

THE smallest incident to upset the ordinary routine of a country village is a subject of deep interest to the community, and the affair of Annie Jones created a nine-days' wonder in Little Downshire. It was discussed for nights in the bar of the 'Blue Boar,' and Fred Burke's behaviour was severely censured. He was walking out with Annie, and after her tragic death actually had the impudence to lay the blame at the door of Mrs. Gainsford, whose protégée Annie was. As the Squire's wife said: 'What *can* you do with people like that?'

Mrs. Gainsford, naturally, was prostrated for days, and received a good deal of sympathy. Never again, she is said to have declared, would she lift a finger to relieve the anxiety of the less fortunate than herself.

It was during her first winter in Little Downshire that she became acquainted with Annie Jones, who lived in two rooms over the post office and general store, and did dressmaking for a living. She was a not-unattractive young woman; quick and clever with her fingers, and capable of producing the most exquisite embroidery. It was Mrs. Waite, the Vicar's wife, who told Mrs. Gainsford what a pity it was that the girl had no sewing machine, the possession of which would enable her to increase her output of work.

Mrs. Gainsford, a wealthy widow, leapt at the opportunity of assuming the rôle of Lady Bountiful. She would, she said, present Annie with a machine. The news flew round the village and did much to increase her popularity. Annie herself was overcome with emotion when Mrs. Waite and Mrs. Gainsford called to tell her that the machine had been ordered from London.

She stood awkwardly between the two visitors, twisting her long, thin fingers together in embarrassment. Her sallow cheeks were blotched unbecomingly with crimson. 'It's turribly good of you, m'am,' she muttered over and over again in her soft, Sussex

drawl. 'I feel that uncomfortable like I don't know as how I ought to let you do it.'

'Nonsense!' Mrs. Gainsford exclaimed. 'It will give me great pleasure if you will accept it, and may it bring you lots of business and good luck.' She glanced round the dingy little room with a sad smile, and then up at the thin, round-shouldered girl standing beside her chair. Her own virtue brought her an inward glow of satisfaction; and the girl was showing just the right amount of reluctance to accept the gift to make the giving an added pleasure.

Mrs. Waite was beaming. 'It is so good of you, Mrs. Gainsford. Annie is a little overcome, I think, but I am sure she thanks you with all her heart.'

'Indeed I do, m'am,' Annie stammered. 'But 'tis such a lot of money and—and I can but thank you in return.' Her face flushed to an even deeper hue.

'There!' Mrs. Gainsford rose and patted her shoulder kindly, inwardly reflecting that the poor little devil was behaving charmingly. 'Think no more about it, my dear. Indeed you owe me nothing; it is I that should thank you for giving me the chance to make some little offering to another in return for all my own happiness and good fortune.'

'Tell me all about her,' she said to Mrs. Waite as the latter accepted Mrs. Gainsford's invitation to tea, and the two ladies were walking down the High Street.

Mrs. Waite smiled. 'You will be disappointed if I cannot tell you a story of great hardship, Mrs. Gainsford, but Annie has really been fortunate. Most girls of her age would have been in service long ago, but her father—our late postmaster—would not hear of it. Annie is supposed to be delicate, although I have never heard of her being actually ill, and she taught herself dressmaking. She could not bear to leave her old home when her father died, and the new postmaster and his wife have let her their spare rooms. They are very good to her, I believe. Recently I have heard rumours that she has been seen about with Fred Burke—a farm-labourer, when he does any work at all, and one of our n'er-do-wells—but I do not credit it. She is a highly respectable girl, and a regular church-goer, and would scarcely be attracted to a man of his type.'

Mrs. Gainsford tapped her companion's arm playfully. 'Now, Mrs. Waite, you know I believe absolutely in people being allowed to follow their own bent. I am glad Annie was not forced into service, and as for the young man, she may be a good influence in

his life. One never knows. I shall go and see her sometimes and try and brighten up her life a little, poor girl.'

She was as good as her word. Annie was pleased and flattered in a shy, undemonstrative way. She became quite used to pushing her sewing off the spare chair in her room for the visitor, and exhibiting her embroidery for Mrs. Gainsford's admiration. It was a little bit of a hindrance sometimes, when she had a special order to complete at short notice, but, on the other hand, Mrs. Gainsford was so kind, and had been so good to her, the least she could do was to set aside her work and answer all the questions the lady put to her. No one can doubt that Mrs. Gainsford was interested in Annie, and was extremely kind to her.

She admitted that the girl was a little difficult to understand—she would not go as far as to say she was sly—but sometimes her answers to questions, particularly as regards her friendship with Fred Burke, were a little ambiguous. Perhaps it was her country ignorance that made it difficult for her to open out. Mrs. Gainsford liked people to open out with her; she boasted of her understanding of the lower classes, and that her maids were devoted to her, body and soul.

It was with the coming of the vogue for Spanish shawls that the seeds were sown that were destined to ripen into tragedy. Mrs. Gainsford had purchased one when on a visit to London, and bore it to Annie's rooms in triumph.

'Look!' she exclaimed, opening the parcel. 'Isn't it exquisite? All it needs now is some of your beautiful embroidery to set off the colouring.'

Annie touched the folds of fringed, tangerine-coloured *crêpe de Chine* gingerly, and agreed.

'I've set my heart on wearing it the evening my brother-in-law arrives from India,' Mrs. Gainsford went on. 'That will be Thursday—I am giving a dinner to welcome him. Can you manage it by then, Annie?'

The girl puckered her brow and looked worried. 'Wish I could promise for sure, m'am,' she replied dubiously, 'but there's the frock I've sworn to alter by Wednesday for Mrs. Tiggs. She'll be wanting it for the Chapel bazaar.'

'Oh!' There was more surprise than annoyance in Mrs. Gainsford's voice. 'Well, then, of course you can't.' And then she did a strange thing. Stretching out her hand she ran it slowly up and down the base of the sewing machine standing upon the

table. It may have been subconscious; one would like to think it was. To Annie, cast in a more delicate mould than any had given her credit for, the gesture spoke plainer than words.

For a second she hesitated; then: 'I'll do it for you, m'am,' she said quietly. 'Mrs. Tiggs'll 'ave to bide a bit for her frock. After all your goodness to me 'tis a little enough thing to do in return.'

Mrs. Gainsford was all smiles. 'You dear girl!' she exclaimed. 'I knew you wouldn't let me down.'

Annie sat far into the nights stitching great, brown butterflies with wings of marvellously blended hues into the four corners of the shawl, but work as she might, the undertaking was not completed until Thursday. By then she had lost Mrs. Tiggs as a patron.

The matter might have ended there, had not Mrs. Gainsford's shawl been much admired. Shawls began to arrive by post for her to adorn for Mrs. Gainsford's London friends. Her patrons in Little Downshire became fewer and fewer. They could not be blamed; when her work was no longer done to the time for which it was ordered it caused much inconvenience.

Mrs. Gainsford was delighted with the girl's success in a wider sphere. Once, indeed, Annie did, haltingly, broach the subject that she might have been unfair to her old patrons, whereat Mrs. Gainsford had rapped an irritated tattoo with her fingers upon the lid of the sewing machine, and exclaimed: 'But if you feel like that, Annie, by all means return to your old work.'

Annie went on embroidering. The grand London ladies for whom she worked were curiously lax at paying her bills, and—one could not press them; were they not the friends of her benefactress? She grew thinner and more sallow of face; her eyes big and strained by long hours working by lamp-light. People ceased to talk about her keeping company with Fred Burke. He was drinking heavily, and there were rumours that he had taken to poaching. She was well rid of him, people said.

Mrs. Gainsford began to find other uses for Annie. The novelty of village life was wearing thin and she was regretting her whole-hearted plunge into its activities. Annie made an admirable substitute at the Sewing Classes, and, surely, it was a nice little relaxation for her to get away from her own work? Then there was the day when the parlour-maid stupidly sprained her ankle

on the eve of a dinner party, and Mrs. Gainsford called upon Annie and asked her, so sweetly, to undertake the work, just for one evening.

'But I couldn't, m'am; really I couldn't. I don't know nothing about it, and I'd make a fool of myself. Don't ask me, m'am, please,' Annie pleaded, twisting her hands.

So Mrs. Gainsford said: 'Don't distress yourself. Of course I won't press you, Annie, only it was an important dinner, and—but no matter.' She ran her fingers slowly over the top of the sewing machine, and sighed.

Annie went, of course; to receive in return for her services a playful scolding for the incredible clumsiness and stupidity she displayed, despite her careful coaching.

What the state of the girl's mind was by this time one can only suspect. Tired out and undernourished as she was, one can imagine that she had visions of the whole of her life given in payment for a gift that was no longer of any use to her. Nightmares she must have experienced, of requests that were commands, the fulfilment of which would in part repay her debt. And always there must have been present the sight of slender, white, ringed hands, touching the sewing machine; stating so plainly to her morbid sensitiveness: 'I gave you this; should you not gladly do all that I ask?' Even to herself she dared not rebel, to shrink appalled at her own ingratitude. From the beauty and delicacy of her work it was possible to guess at the sensitiveness of the ego animating that drab little body, but no one did. She was just Annie Jones, the village dressmaker, who seemed too busy to exchange a civil word with anyone now that Mrs. Gainsford had taken her up.

Fred Burke said so openly to her face. It was over a month since they had met, when she slipped out one evening on an errand for the postmaster's wife, and came face to face with him in the High Street. She averted her head, but he caught her brusquely by the arm.

'Don't see much of you nowadays, Annie. Too took up with your grand friends, I reckon.'

'Tisn't that, Fred,' she lied awkwardly. 'But I'm turribly busy just now, which you ain't, seemingly'—and she rated him with the rumours that were current of his poaching.

'The same old Annie!' he exclaimed, as she came to the end of her tirade. 'Goles! you got a tongue when you set to using it.'

If I likes to spend an evening after rabbits when a bird's done me down, who cares?' he laughed.

'Now, Fred, there wasn't nothing serious betwixt us,' she retorted. 'Just 'cause I'm busy and can't walk out with you like I uster there's no call for you drinking and poaching.'

'You? Much you care!' he jeered. 'Reckon you done trying to reform me, eh? I don't get much of it now you're took up by the gentry.'

She winced. 'That's it! Pick on me for what I can't 'elp!' she exclaimed, almost hysterically, and he stared at her.

'Why, Annie——'

'Don't!' she said, more quietly. 'I—I can't bear it. Don't listen to me; reckon I'm a bit run down like.' She tried to smile.

'You don't get enough fresh air,' he grunted. He caught her arm again, adding, almost shyly: 'Look 'ere, Annie, meet me ternight and let's 'ave a bit of a walk and talk like we uster. Let your work go 'ang fer once. Reckon I'm—I'm fond of you, Annie. If you promises to meet me down by Four-Stile Meadows ternight at six I'll know you cares a bit, too. If you don't—well, I'll 'ave a last bu'st and clear off ter Canada.'

Her cheeks were crimson as she hurried back to her rooms. She held her head down lest passers-by should surprise the secret shining in her eyes. He cared—he'd owned it. She could have sung for joy. She had known Fred from childhood; knew the real man beneath the rough, good-for-nothing exterior he displayed to the world. The real man that would show itself under her care and guidance. Her heart swelled as, scarcely daring, she peered ahead into the future. Mr. Waite reading out the banns . . . perhaps they could get one of those new cottages being built at the edge of the village. Once get Fred anchored and settled she'd see to it he was in regular employment. He'd hearken to her; he'd always been kind to her since they'd played together as children. There probably wasn't another in the village who realised, as she did, that it was the death of the mother he'd loved that had caused him to run astray.

With strangely clumsy fingers, she was retrimming her old straw hat when Mrs. Gainsford burst unceremoniously into the room.

'Oh, Annie,' she exclaimed, 'do pack up your machine and come back with me. I have some friends staying, and we're arranging some private theatricals, and need your help with the

sewing. I've been buying the quaintest stuff at Watkins'—quite antediluvian—and I've got the car outside.'

Annie had risen to her feet, her face twitching. 'M'am?' she stammered.

'Do hurry, there's a good girl,' Mrs. Gainsford urged.

Annie put an unsteady hand to her forehead. 'But—but I'm meeting Fred Burke s'evening, m'am,' she muttered, unable to shape her thoughts into speech that would surely, surely take effect.

'Gracious! you have many more evenings in which to meet him,' Mrs. Gainsford remarked impatiently.

Rooted to the spot in fascinated horror, Annie saw two white hands outstretched, resting lightly upon the cover of the sewing machine on the table between them. Slender hands with glittering finger-nails that rivalled the glittering of the diamond rings adorning them. She wanted to shriek out; to beg and pray for mercy and release from the debt that was made to loom so monstrously in her consciousness by a single, silent gesture. The fact that she had more than repaid Mrs. Gainsford in free sewing, and in many other ways, for all that she had received, was beyond her comprehension.

'It's Fred, m'am,' she whispered hoarsely. 'I've promised . . .'

Mrs. Gainsford tittered angrily. 'Oh, come Annie, you'll be getting yourself into trouble if you go on associating with him. As I've told you before, he is only playing with you. You are too good a girl to waste on him. If it is honestly against your will, I wouldn't dream of urging you to come with me for the evening, but'—she paused, playing with the lock of the sewing machine—'this chance to show your skill as a dress-designer may lead to lots of work for you. I do believe in people taking opportunities. But if you'd rather not—' She shrugged her shoulders.

Even then the girl might have been saved. If she had only realised the bonds were of her own making; not the links of steel they seemed; not even as strong as cotton stitching. But Mrs. Gainsford had been so kind, giving her that machine—pounds it must have cost—and she ought to show her gratitude, even if it meant worse than losing her local patrons. Even if it meant losing Fred. Perhaps Mrs. Gainsford was right; he was only playing with her. She didn't want to make herself cheap. He'd picked up a lot of wild ways since his mother's death; perhaps he wasn't still the Fred she'd always known. She ought to help Mrs. Gainsford when

she got the chance. It would make her feel easier in her mind about all that she owed her.

She laid the hat gently upon the table, and moistened her dry lips with the tip of her tongue. 'I'll come, m'am,' she said dully.

It was ten o'clock that evening when she walked back to her rooms. Fred Burke, supported upon either side by a friend, was coming out of the 'Blue Boar.' She had to step aside to avoid colliding with him. His mood was merry; if he had been hurt and angry by her failure to meet him it was forgotten. With tipsy solemnity, he touched the peak of his cap as he saw her.

'Why, chaps, it's Annie. Pore scraggy Annie! Cheer-o, Annie! I'm off ter Canada. 'Member me in your prayers!' he called, as she crossed the road.

His greeting shocked her unutterably. Bad language she had heard in plenty from her father; had Fred sworn at her it would have seemed only natural. But this mocking greeting that had drawn loud guffaws from his companions sounded the death-knell of all that she had hoped.

Silently she passed by, her head bowed.

The following day her body was recovered from the stream that ran through the meadows where she was to have met him. Someone suddenly remembered that her grandfather had died insane. When there was *that* in a family, they said, you never knew when it would come out. In her rooms was found a letter addressed to Fred Burke, the contents of which he did not hesitate to make public; understanding, in some blind, dim way, all its purport.

DEAR FRED,—

I cant bear it no more speshally after what you said to me tonight but I know you was drunk and didnt mean it oh Fred I never asked her to give me a sewing mashine she done it and now I cant ever stop paying her back. The London ladies never pay my bills, and the mashine is being brought back tomorrow by her showfiar but I cant face it and know she will tutch it when she wants anything done like. Please try and keep off the drink your Mother would be upset. Good-bye, Fred,

ANNIE.

DANDIE DINMONT.

BY G. E. MITTON.

THERE have been many guesses at the prototype of Dandie Dinmont in *Guy Mannering*. One of the most favoured of the originals is James Davidson of Hindlee, and there can be little doubt that he was the true one. Dalgleish, butler to Sir Walter Scott for seven years, and knowing the mind of his master, mentions him as such without any hesitation, as though it were a fact. Dalgleish knew the man well, since, as a boy of about fourteen, he had served with him as cattle herd.

He gives us a story of 'Dandie Dinmont' which brings out the strength and weakness of the rugged type of God-fearing Scotsman of the Border. It is enlivened by characteristic touches, as when the daughter, Nelley, asks Dalgleish to go with her into the parlour as she has something very important to say to him, and he thinks 'What the divell is this? No good; althou I daresay she is a good crature.' Life-like also is the pen-picture of the speechless James the younger, whose one desire in life is to be let alone.

He follows this up with two anecdotes of his earlier associations with Davidson; in these sketches Sir Walter Scott does not actually appear, but they are worth reading for their extraordinary fidelity to life.

'Sir Walter Scott mentions Dandie Dinmont in his writings, and as I am acquainted with the family, I will give the detail of them as near as I can, and what tooke place during my being thare.

'His right name is George Davison, whome origenely belonged to Liddesdale, but at the time I was about the family they lived at a place called Hindlee in Rule watter. He is a grat sheep farmer and a grat man of himself. He weas twenty-four ston, four pound and a half; I did see him weed (weighed). His wife was a little woman but stout made. They had two sons and one daughter. The names of the sons was Richard, this is the eldest, the second they called James. The daughter they called Nelley.

'The eldest son got married, so his father put him into a sheep farm, upon the Jed watter. James remained at home to look after the affairs of the farming, as his father was getting rather frail by this time. James would be about thirty-five years of age and

declared to me that he never would marry. His father and him was exceeding fond of dogs. I have seen about the place at one time thirty of one kind and another. They were famed for tarriers, the otter breed, and what they called lurchers; they had three greyhounds of the best kind; one Newfoundland, which was kept upon the chane as watch-dog; and as for shepherds' collies they were out of number.

'They had five shepherds, and had a neat row of houses built for them, and each shepherd had his own house, and each house had one apartment, and none of them married althou there was two brothers amongst them; yet they lived seperet from each other in thare own rooms. James and Thomas Telford, this was the name of the two brothers. So you will not hinder Thomas to pay his addresses to Nelley Davison of Hindlee, and Nelley listened as attentively to them, so in a short time Nelley and Thomas got married, all in secret.

'In about five months after the marrage hir mother dies, so here poor Nelley left to be housekeeper to hir father, and weering (wearying) at the same time to get along with Thomas Telford. Nelley seed no alternetive than just to let hir father know all about the marrage. So, as soon as decency would allow after the death of hir mother, Nelley says to me one day:

"William, you are a doos laddie, and I think you can be trusted with a secret, now as father is goine out in a little, I wish to speak to you. So you will come into the parler here."

'The old man gone: "What the divell is this she wishes to speak about?—No good, allthou I daresay she is a good crature."

'In I went and sat down.

"William——" she quite on a serious countenance, "Now William I am goine to give you a message to my father, and you must deliver it the best way you can. Well William, Thomas Telford and me is married, and I wish you to tell him of it, for I am weering to get home to my own house."

"Well Nelley, if that is all, I will do what I can for you, and more if required."

'Here was I upon nettles untill I got this off my stomak. However it will not be longe, for here cumes Mr. Davison. He is scarcely seated untill I entered the room.

"Well William, I have ben out and have had a long walk."

"Well sir, I hope you will be the better of it."

"Thank you for your good wishes."

"Now sir, I am goine to deliver a message to you, so whither you take it well or ill, you are not to blame me for it. It is that Thomas Telford and your daughter Nelley is married."

"What the divell do you say sir? Leave the room immediatly."

"Sir, a messenger should neither be beheadet nor hanged."

'So he got into a pashon, and made his nibby stick shin after me the length of the room.

'So after he was come to himself a little, I was sent for. In I goes.

"Well William, who was telling you such absurd stuff about Nelley?"

"Sir, it was Nelley herself so do not blame me for it."

"Well, sit down for a little untill I consider. She must leave this house emediatly. Do you know if she is in the house?"

"She is not."

"Do you know whare to find her?"

"Yes."

"Well then go and let hir know that she leaves this house emediatly, and never to enter the threshold of it again, and that I am goine oute, and that she may take the oppertunity of my absence to pack up all that belongs to hir, and be off for ever. I do not wish to see hir face again."

'Off he goes. I soone found poor Nelley; gets all bundled up, and off she sets, with my assistance, and reached Thomas Telford's. A grate many questions as to how the old man stood the shock when I told him about hir. I informed hir the best way I could.

'The old man came in asking for me, so as soone as I entered the room: "Well William, is she gone?"

"Yes sir."

"And a good job," says the old man. "Well then sit down. Now what am I to do? Here is hir mother gone, here is she gone and I left with no body to look after the house, and James declares that he never will marry. Well I must get sume old materon to act as housekeeper. Here cumes James. Well James this is a pretty story about your sister Nelley."

"What is it, father?"

"What is it?"—quite impatient untill he was told—"Yes I think we are cuming to a low ebb now when your sister is married to Thomas Telford."

"Houts," says James. "It will be nonsense."

"Yes, nonsense indeed, but it is trew sence, and I have packet hir about hir business never to enter here again, so you had better send for Richard your brother, and we will consult with him about the matter."

"Well father I do not see what is to hinder William to go that length. Let him stop all night, and Richard and him can be here to-morrow morning."

"So off I set and brought Richard."

"Well Richard, I suppose you know all about it as William would be telling you upon your journey."

"I ast William what was the ado at Hindlee that had brought him for me, but I could not get a word out of him."

"What do you think? Isn't your sister Nelley and Thomas Telford married? And I have sent for you to consult with you what is to be done."

"Well father, if I had known that was what you wanted with me, I sertenly would not have cume, for what can I do into it? There is no dout you wished hir to get a farmer's son, and that he was seeking hir to make hir his wife, but there is amongst them as thare is amongst other people, good and bad, and you know verry little about this young man that was asting hir hand to marrage. I have no dout but Thomas Telford will make a good husband, and he is a good honest fellow. Consider, Thomas has ben with you this last siven years and no fault found with him."

"Yes Richie. But how are they to live? His sellery is not fit to keep them."

"Dear father, you have that in your power to make them better."

"Better," says the old man. "It will be a long time or I will make them better. They can better themselves if they like and go to whare they like."

"Well father, I cannot trifell any longer, for I promised to be home tonight, and as it is getting advanced in the day I shall bid you farewell for the present."

"James go and see your brother away a bit upon the road.—Well William you see that I have gote little satisfaction from my son Richie, and as for James he says that he will tak no side whatever. So here I remain and what to do I do not know."

"Sir, will you have a boy speak?"

"Oh yes, is it yourself that you mean?"

"If you please."

"Well get on."

"In the furst place, I do not see but that Nelley might be as useful to you as ever, for it is only about a quarter of a mile betwixt your house and hers; so I see no defeculty of Nelley being with you once or twice a day, providing helth and wether permits. If you would bend your mind to such."

"Verrey good, William, what nixt?" says the old man in a sneering manner.

"Well sir, I advise you to curb your temper and bethink yourself; for this last three weeks there has not ben family worship in your house. Is this like Mr. Davison, who had all his servants assembled round him in this room? You are sertenly much to blame for neglecting such a duty. If the master does not show a good example what can you expect of the servants?"

"Well William, I do agree with you, but consider what I have suffered. It has driven my mind into a state of distraction. I have not my own mind a moment, and so few to give me advice. I have had more comfort from you than I have had from my own sons. I find I must give in to the marrage, and as I have it in my power I shall make them comfortable. So if tomorrow be a good day, step over to Richie's and let him know that I want to see him."

"I did so, and he came along with me. I opened my mind to Richie at this time, and he was happy that his father had come to this resolution."

"Here we arrives. "Now sit both down, and I will see if there is anything in the bottle."

"We both had nead of a wee drope after walking ten miles."

"Now Richie, my mind is made up and I feel so much comfort as I think we will just send for Thomas and Nelley, and have things settled."

"With all my heart, father."

"Well William, step that length and let them know that Richard is here, and that I wish to see them. You may say that it is upon good termes that I wish to see them."

"I was not longe of delivering this message."

"Well, well Nelley, you may go, but damned a foot I shall."

"You won't?" says I. "If you knew as much of the old man's mind as I do, you would not delay a moment, so I advise you to cume emediatly."

"Off they both came, and I ushered them into the room."

"God bless you both bairns, I am happy to see you. Cume

sit down and I must tell you that I have got clear of a verrey heavy burden; that is I have gote my mind made up to see you, and I shall make you comfortable. I have Richard here to help me. William, do you know whare to find James?"

"I shall get him if possible."

"So, as I was goine oute, James was cuming in. I told him that Thomas and Nelley was with his father, and Richard his brother likewise, and that they had made it up, and that his father was to make them comfortable."

"Well," says James, "if you had not given me this information I would not have entered the door, for I don't wish to interfere betwixt man and wife."

"So James entered the room without saying a single word to one or the other of them."

"James," says the old man, "I have gote Thomas and Nelley and your brother to consult with, and I hope you will not be backward in giving us your opinion amongst the rest."

"I will see," says James quite dryly.

"I gote up to leave them by themselves, as they were goine to enter upon privet affairs concerning the making of them happy."

"Whare are you goine, William? Do not you leave the room. I wish you to be here, for if it had not ben for you I don't think this meeting would have taken place."

"(Turning to the married couple he went on:—) "In the furst place your sellery is too small to make you comfortable. I give you no more money yearly, but what is equivelent to it I will give you a score of sheep and they will grase along with mine. You have your own mark upon them, and whatever offspring they may have, you must dispose of them, or make the best of them that you may not have more than a score upon my grounds. Likewise your house is too small, therefore I will get a room added to it. Now Nelley there is a key which you have often had through your hands, see if you can use it now. You will find a packet lying in the corner of the drawer, give it me oute."

"Which of them, father will I bring to you, as there is two here?"

"Let me have them both, I thought there was only one." The old man gave them a squeeze betwixt his hands. "This is too hard." So taking the softest, he counted down twenty pound, and desired Nelley to take it up. "Well Nelley, that will help to make you comfortable and likewise help to furnish your room. Now I

will see what is in this bag." So after opening it—"Here is a slip of paper neatly folded up." He reads it to himself, at the same time the tears was falling from his eyes. We all lookit at each other but durst not speak. So the old man, taking his henkchief and wiping the tears from his eyes, says, "my children, I will read this over to you."

"My dear husband, you will find fifty quenes (guineas?) in the corner of your drawer, which is to be given to Nelley upon the day of hir marriage, providing that she lives to see that time. I hope you will have the pleasure of delivering it into hir own hand with our blissings alonge with it, for she has ben a dutiful daughter to us. I find I am fast sinking and that I cannot be longe in this world, so I bid you all adeu for ever, sined (signed) by my own hand, Mrs. Davison, Hindlee."

'So this was handet to Nelley without being counted.

"Now children, as all is settled and the night not far gone, I think we will have a tasting of sumething before we part."

'So there was a little toddy made and all verrey cheery over it and then dismissed.'

'Then I left Hindlee for a month, went to a place called Forkens three miles further down the watter; did not like it, wished to be back to Hindlee, and as luck would have it, at the month's end was summoned back to Hindlee and in the note that I received giving me the information, said that as Charles the plow man would be down with a cart of peats to the blacksmith, that I could embrace the oppertunety of cuming alonge with him, which I did. So as soon as Charles is ready to start here is a cart full of children all ready to get a hurrell (lift) from Charles. So while the children was in the cart Charles caused me to walk which I was not alltogether well pleased at.

'After he had taken the children a full mile on the road he set them at liberty, and as Charles was in the act of taking the rains off the heems (reins off the hames) to bring backe into the cart and manage the horse, I took the oppertunety to pull a handful of netels (nettles) and put them below the mare's tail. No sooner done than she had the fore end of the cart out with hir heels. She gets into a sharp trot and then into a gallop in spite of poor Charles, all that he could do at last was just to let hir go, for he was not able to hold on any longer. So she went off like the verrey divell.

"Lord's mercy," says Charles, "what can have frightened

hir ? For I have drove hir and rode hir for this siven years, and I never saw hir take such a flight as this."

'We had not gone far upon the road untill we came to the wheells upon the road.

"Gad be here ! She has the cart all to pieces. Faith, I would not wonder but we will cume to hirself lying dead and what will I say when I go home ?"

'So on we goes. Here is more of the cart lying. It is all to pieces. Home we arrives ; the good people happy to see Charles in life.

"Well Charles, how did this take place ?"

"Dear knows. I cannot tell what frightened hir, and I did all that lay in my power to keep hir back, but I gote quite pourles and off she set."

"Well you must put hir into another cart and bring home the wheels and boards. If she plays the same plisky again she will never be yoked again."

'Off Charles went. The mare was home halff an houre before Charles, and poor Charles, all out of braith, was goine to speak to Mr. Davison but too short of wind. So Mr. Davison took speech in hand. "Charles, I see that it will not do to trust hir any longer, so off she goes from me the furst oppertunity, so keep your mind easy in regard to what has happened. I attach no blame to you."

'I thought to myself, if you knew who was the cause of it, I would no longer be your favourate, but this niver was found oute, as I keepit it a dead secret.'

'There was another mishap I was instigator to, as Mr. Davison had the young boys for herding his coves and taking care of sume young cattle, and them and I sleepit together. So we was all three verrey gracious with one another, so I proposed to them to go and have a game at boggle about the stacks instead of attending prayers that night. They consented, and off we set, and happy we was. But prayers being over, here cumes Mr. Davison with his large red nightcap and his nibby stick. We was not ill to be found, for we was making such a noise. So he came straight to the stack yard and thought nae dout, that he would do for us, but we was too soople for him, so when he found that it would not do, he says : "Well young men, you have thought proper to stop oute from prayers, so you may go to bed as soon as you like, and you shall have no supper."

‘This we thought was rather doine us, but still, as we said, we had rather want our suppers, than run the risk of getting a good threshing. So off to bed we goes, consulting with one another how or what way we was to fase him nixt day. However my two companions fell asleep. In a short time I hears the door open, so listened, and here is sumebdy aproaching toward the bed. I slipt oute of bed and gote in one corner of the room. So here is Mr. Davison all in the dark, and I sitting in the corner of the room. No sooner had he reached the bedside than nibby was applied with all vengence, not minding whare he did strick, and as the poor fellows was asleep they gote up with a dredfull yell, and called oute what was I threshing them for. “I am shure,” say they, “we never did you any ill.”

“I will ill you, you scoundrels ! Will you ever stop oute from prayers again ? ”

“No, no, no. We always will attend.”

“Well see it be the kase or I will give you ten times more the nixt time.”

‘So off he goes.

‘As sone as I heard the door shut I made into bed. I told them how thankful I was that I had escaped the punishment further than was verrey cold from sitting in the corner of the room. Nixt, how was we to fase him nixt morning ?

‘However we was not of much caring, as he had punished us so suveerly that night that he could not say much.

‘Here I came in contact with him nixt day.

“Well you raskell, how did you like your liks last night ? ”

“I gote none, sir.”

“You gote none ? ”

“No sir.”

“Was you not in bed ? ”

“No sir.”

“Whare were you ? ”

“Sitting in the corner of the room. I heard you cuming and I slipt oute of bed.”

“Well then you have saved your punishment for being so onest as tell the truth, but I have no doubt but you was the instigater of leading the boys away.”

“I was, sir.”

“Well you must not do the like again, or then you and I must part.”

"So then I took the oppertunity of letting him know that I intended to leave Hindlee in the course of two days.

"And whare are you intending to go?"

"To Edinburgh, sir."

"To Edinburgh? What are you goine to do thare?"

"I am to get a place there."

"A place! There is many places, but what do you intend doine?"

"I am not shure yet, but I must do sumething to bring in munej."

"So two days after I informed him that I was redy to start.

"Well William, you have ben here many a time, and always found you diligent and obligen, and I hope wherever you go you may be happy, and as I intend making you a present for your goodness, I shall not say what it is, but I shall fold it up, and you are not to unfold it untill you reach your father's, and then you may gratify your curosety."

"So I got the packet, shook hands and parted, and bade Hindlee good-bye.

"I had not gone a few miles when I thought upon the packet, and considered within myself whether to open it or not. So sate down and opened the packet, and to my astonishment here is fower pounds. "Now," thinks I to myself. "If I informe father, he will take it from me, and as I am goine to Edinburgh it may cume of use to me." So I reached father's, but not a word of the packet. Let him know that I intended to go to Edinburgh.

"What, have you left Hindlee for good and all?"

"Yes father, I will never see it more."

"And what do you intend doine in Edinburgh?"

"Whatever will bring me in money."

"So I stopped two days at father's, and then went off for Edinburgh. Eight and forty miles, not a short walk. Weering (wearying) much for a return chase so that I might have a chance of getting on a hangey by giving the driver a dram or a trifell for himself. Here cumes one. Providing it is empty. When it came up to me I made a signal to the driver. He tipped me a wink. There was one inside. A gentleman. The gentleman was as sharp as the driver or yet me, for he observed our motions and called to the post-boy to stop.

"Well my friend, do you want a lift forward upon the road?"

"If you please, sir."

"How far are you goine?"

"To Edinburgh."

"Oh, I am goine there too. Verrey well, cume inside."

I, blushing, did not like to refuse the gentleman's kind offer. After he had gote me beside him he ast me a grate number of questions, and in answering and questioning, I found oute who he was, which put me upon my guard how to answer him. But he putting a question to me, threw me—or rather I may say that I durst not deny him the answer. He ast me whare I came from and who I belonged to. I told him.

"Oh, I know your father. He is with Lord Napier."

"Yes, sir."

"Well I am Lord Napier's uncle. I have just left Wilton Lodge now. As I am a seafaring man I think you could not do better than go with me, and I will make you a man for your father's sake."

'As to that I could not give him a sufficient answer, as I was still under father's controul, but I said if he could get father's and mother's consent that I would have no objections; I would go anywhere to make muney. Here we landed in Edinburgh. He ast me if father had put anything into my pocket before my leaving him. I informed him that father had not much to spare oute of his small selery.

"Well, well, I shall write your father upon the subject in the course of two days, and you must call here where you will find me, and I will let you know what is to be done. So I bid you good-bye at present, and you will take this from me, it perhaps will be the means of stopping up a ball's hole.

'But I had the good fortune to be engaged to Sir William Forbes of Pitsligo, who was banker in the Parliament Square. This was in eighteen hundred and one—so I was fifteen years of age when I entered Edinburgh, and still am able to toddle about in Edinburgh yet.'

THE HOLLOW WAY.

BY WINIFRED F. PECK.

THE Rector was about to close his book, and proceed with his candlestick to bed, when he heard a tap on his unshuttered window. Below the garden, with its battlement of moist laurel bushes, lay the high road, a dim white stream in the clinging sea-mist, but the Rector did not turn to peer down upon it. Every age has its own etiquette, and in the Rector's day illicit trafficking was conducted with some dignity. He might be trusted to keep his suspicions to himself, and his gratitude as well. Next morning, as he walked the garden with his daughter, Kitty, he would observe, with surprise, a cask of rum and a chest of tea beneath a sheltering shrub. 'How many blessings has Providence bestowed on us!' he would remark: the incident would be closed, and the cask and chest opened.

But to-night there came another tap on the window-pane.

The Rector looked up quickly, to see a face framed in the misty darkness of the night. The eyes seeking his were narrowed so sharply by pouched eyelids that the appeal in them darted out, like a flickering flame through a closed doorway. Then the face vanished and there was a knock on the front door.

'May peace be with us both,' said Father Benedict. Under his black cape he carried a bundle, and put it on the table with the air of one who has come to stay.

'But why Father Benedict?' grumbled Kitty next morning, when her father brought her news of the strange guest before breakfast. 'Why call him Father? We're good Protestants!'

'Courtesy, my dear, courtesy,' said the Rector. 'He is a very finished gentleman, a priest of the old order.'

'How long will he be here?' asked practical Kitty.

'I have not asked. "A stranger and I took him in, hungry and I fed him."'

'You did, my dear, indeed! There's barely a morsel of the chine left. What's his business?'

'His first business was to escape from France. He remained in France, it appears, all through the Revolution, labouring with

his hands by day, and carrying consolation to the faithful by night. Later he served in Bonaparte's armies all over France, putting patriotism above religion for the time. Now that the Emperor is in exile the present Government holds him suspect, and he thought it best to leave France till his enemies were off the scent.'

'And till my business here is over!' said a voice at the doorway.

Father Benedict was a personality, there was no doubt about that. Tall, stout, urbane, he looked down, from those veiled eyes above his hooked nose, with the condescension of a man of the world to a village maiden, and the impersonal interest and pleasure of an ageing priest in a pretty young girl. But Kitty had been taken into the world just often enough by her mother's sister, Lady Damer, to be unimpressed by a grand manner: she knew too well how, laughingly, to manage her clever, slovenly father, to feel shy in the presence of a strange cleric. She might seem very young and innocent in her pink morning gown, with her baby cheeks and fluffy golden hair, but she had keen observation, and very definite prejudices. Amongst these was a dislike for muffled footsteps and listening at doorways, so to the magnificent courtesy of the Father's greeting, at the formal introduction, she gave only a cool little nod.

'So you meant to make us this visit, sir? You are not just a piece of jetsam from our hollow way?'

'Kitty!' said her father reprovingly. 'Let me explain my daughter's jest to you, sir! Last night you travelled roughly, I expect, for our friends, the Gentry, as the smugglers are called in these parts, have no love for the high roads. From the Channel to our village, ever rising from the coast, is a series of lanes, sunk beneath the level of the road, and so closely over-topped by leaves that they seem to the casual observers but thick hedges. These are the hollow ways which our people shun and the Gentry, who ply their trade across the seas, frequent. Straight up from the sea they come, flinging up their goods, as it were jetsam, from the beach itself. Here they join the high road, but at a little distance you may see such another running up the downs. 'Tis said that here they finally collect their goods before their journey to London, seven miles from the coast, out of sight of the Preventive men. 'Tis none of my business, I hold: that business is to live peaceably with my neighbours.'

'It was my good fortune, then, that these very ways led me to the village of Silmington, the bourne of my journey, as I will explain,' said the priest.

Kitty was a good hostess. She rejoiced that her visits to Lady Mainwaring made her insist on a more varied and ample breakfast table than could be found in most Sussex rectories. But as she dispensed coffee, eggs and ham she listened acutely enough to Father Benedict's story. She would be first with it at the Priory!

'The Priory itself, the bourne of your visit, has had indeed its jetsam from your coasts,' said the Rector, when Father Benedict's tale was unfolded. If Kitty's attention wandered a little, as the well-known story of her father began, her critical faculties were still awake. How badly men told a story! How apt they were to omit the picturesque, the essential details!

'The Priory of Silmington was founded, daughter house to a Benedictine abbey in Normandy, before William I came to conquer England: it was closed before the Reformation, and by the year 1750 was no more than a farm, rented to varying families by its noble owners far away. In the year 1772 my Lady Gage, returning from France with a new French maid, lost a wheel of her coach in the ruts of the hill up to the church, and was rescued and hospitably received by the tenant of the farm, Arthur Brabazon. The acquaintance prospered, and in a few months the lovely French waiting-woman was Mrs. Brabazon. Her loveliness,' said the Rector, 'was indeed mitigated soon by the birth of a baby son, but, as the boy from the first, they say, was the image of his father, an honest, upright, slow Sussex yeoman, she found perhaps more consolation in the visitors who stopped at times on their way to the Priory on their visits from France to England. For Madame Brabazon, as she was called, though but a maid, had been foster-sister to some great lady in France, whose name was never mentioned now, nor had been since the Revolution, and many a package found its way to her, and many a coach stopped at her door. Her son George was married—('and why doesn't father say how she must have stormed when he brought back from Mickleham a fair simple girl like himself,' thought Kitty, 'with hair like the roofs of old Sussex barns, and eyes like their oak beams, and slow speech and sweet common sense, and that way of smiling at Madame's tantrums!')—and a baby Nicholas was added to the household, when, in 1792, a wave flung jetsam on to this far beach.' Kitty could have told that story well, for she had heard it often from Keziah, the old maid at the farm, before she died. One February night, when the farmer and his son George were out on the hills with the shepherds, and George's wife, Mary, was upstairs with her baby in

the cradle, there was the noise of coach wheels, and a great knocking at the farm door. Madame and Keziah forced it open against the storm, to see the light of the postilions' torches flaming in the gusts on a high swaying coach. Within sat, in one corner, a vast lady, swathed in crimson velvet and ermine, her fat face raddled with powder and paint, her fingers stiff with sparkling rings. From the other dismounted timidly a shrinking figure in black and white. "Is this the Priory of Silmington? Is that you, Jeanne Gaudet? I have brought your sister Etienne to stay with you," shouted the old lady. "Send her in, and come you to speak with me." And in Aunt Etienne ran, while Madame Brabazon held converse with her former mistress, till the coach rolled away and left the sisters together.

'A strange household,' said the Rector. 'Madame Brabazon had been maid in her youth, in Paris, in those circles where Voltaire was God, and all the talk was of the Rights of Man. Miss Gaudet boasted, however, of their ancient Breton family and is devout and a Royalist to her finger-tips. Only one thing they had in common, that they both kept, and keep, their past stories in the deepest secrecy.'

'The farmer and his son must have been over-ridden?' asked the priest.

'There was no time. Rheumatic fever killed the old man that winter, and his boy, not yet twenty, died that spring of an accident. His wife has managed the farm-work, and the hands, since, and Madame directed the dairy till she grew stiff with rheumatism. The three women were left, standing like three Fates over the cradle of the little Nicholas.'

'And which directs his destiny?' asked the priest, smiling.

Kitty could have said a good deal on that point, but distaste for her guest kept her silent. Nicholas had grown up, all Sussex farmer to look at, devoted to his mother. But now, in his eighteenth year, his features had sharpened, and a forward thrust of his head and gleam in his dark eyes gave him a likeness to old Madame. He was a lad of mood and changes. At times he was out in the fields all day, at others begging to share Kitty's studies with the Rector. In a perverse mood he would seek Madame's company and come from her raving about social injustice and the need of Revolution. Then again he would frequent his Aunt Etienne, read poetry and heraldry with the nervous, ecstatic old lady, and declare that in her Faith alone he saw the truth. And afterwards he would discuss

high Whig politics with the Rector, or again become a mere boy, riding and fishing and tramping the downs with Kitty. 'Which directs his destiny indeed!' thought Kitty. 'Anyone can do that for the asking.'

'For you are patchwork, Nicholas, patchwork like the dear Priory itself,' she said, when five minutes later she found him waiting for her by the yew hedge which formed the boundary between the churchyard and the Priory farm. She had fluttered over at once from the breakfast-table, to warn the Brabazons of the priest's impending visit.

Five hundred years before this May morning of the year 1816 the Priory must have risen above the barns on one side, and low nave of its chapel on the other, as the Ark of the Church rose in the Ages of Faith above the troubled waters of the world. Now, the vast red-golden roofs of the farm buildings and the spire of the chapel, which had become the village church, obscured its ruins between agricultural prosperity and Protestant security. Its remains were, indeed, a patchwork, or, rather a lovely little piece of ancient tapestry, worked on the calm Sussex landscape. Opposite Kitty was the low Norman gatehouse, flanked by low arched passages of varying dates on one side and by the ruins of the beautiful fourteenth-century refectory on the other. At right angles to it, meeting and making an enclosure with the old brick wall of the churchyard, was the new farm-house, a spacious building of Georgian brick and wide sunny windows. Within the enclosure Aunt Etienne had made a garden of French herbs and prim, budding tulips, while everywhere, amidst fallen capitals of pillars, stone heads of forgotten saints and gargoyles, daffodils and wallflowers made a pasture for the bees. Doves perched on the high ruin of the refectory, stone-crop grew in its bare windows. Only the cuckoos called at dawn for Mattins and the rooks in the elms above the barn sounded the only Angelus.

'I suppose you are laughing at me,' said Nicholas, standing up, tall and slim and vivid against the ruins. 'I may mention that you, in that pink gown against the gravestones and yews, look rather like a cherub which has lost its way on the Day of Judgement!'

'Oh, Nicholas, a compliment!' Kitty blushed happily. It was only lately that a new tone had come into the boy's voice when he spoke to her, a new light in his eyes. How could she help wondering, sometimes, whether she might not yet be a Fourth Fate in the ordering of his destiny? 'But come, quickly! There's your

mother in the farmyard, and I want to prepare you all for a visitor. Through the old gateway before Aunt Etienne catches us! Oh, Aunt Mary! Aunt Mary!

Mrs. Brabazon turned smiling from a herdsman, as the cows trooped out of the gate and crossed the yard towards them. How content and appropriate she looked here among happy out-door things and kindly animals, thought Kitty! How troubled when she sat in the parlour on winter evenings between the two old French ladies!

'Aunt Mary, you must put on your best cap and mittens!' she cried. 'The smugglers came to our door last night, and left us a barrel of rum and a chest of tea and a French priest!'

'And to us only brandy and tobacco!' laughed Nicholas.

'Who is he?' asked Aunt Mary serenely. 'Why does he want to see us?'

'Well, 'tis the Priory he wishes to see, to be truthful. Years ago, before the Revolution, he belonged to a sister or daughter or niece house of your St. Mary of Grestain in Normandy. There he amassed all sorts of papers about this Priory, and now, being out of favour with the French government, he wishes to spend a time of retirement in exploring it. He has stories of buried saints and hidden treasures which made my hairs curl at breakfast. He is most fascinating and well-bred, and Aunt Etienne will fall a victim to his charms at once. But oh horrors! we're too late to warn her to put on her best hood! There she is, wheeling Madame's chair out into the garden, and there are my father and Father Benedict—(oh yes, he expects that title!)—coming in through the churchyard gate. Go and greet them, Nicholas! You too, Aunt Mary, and the stage will be complete!'

The scene was, indeed, to the girl like one of those in the dear delicious play house, to which Lady Damer took her only too seldom. Never indeed could Sadler's Wells provide such a background of blue sky, feathery elms and ruins radiant in the May sunshine. But the group of people were theatrical enough! In the chair, her big head and vast body held upright by her iron will, sat Madame Brabazon: a dark cloak half-covered her, but beneath it you could discern vaguely the curious mixture of red shawl, puce-coloured quilted coat, and old yellow lace scarves, which formed the staple of her wardrobe: the hood concealed her bald forehead, and some of her many chins, but from it peered out her yellow, wrinkled face, and eyes incredibly alive and sharp and bitter. Aunt Etienne by

the side of that bitter, vast, vital personality, fussy, restless, robed in nondescript grey, with a gait as awkward as that of a swan on land, gave the impression, as Nicholas unkindly said, of a battered old shore boat beside a Spanish galleon in full sail long ago.

Mary stood simple, observant in her mellow, middle-aged prettiness beside the two, a perfect foil for their eccentricities. Father Benedict, in black soutane now, with his perfect courtesy and reserve, might serve either as noble patron or wicked uncle (time alone could show !), while her dear, slovenly, clever, absent-minded father, with his old-fashioned wig awry, and bulging pockets, would serve as the moralist and philosopher who too frequently interrupted the action of the drama. And Nicholas—ah, Nicholas !—he was the hero who might prove himself the young gentleman who stamped his way to success, or else, indeed Hamlet, the irresolute, in that queer, wicked play of Shakespeare's. 'As for the heroine, there's none but me !' thought Kitty, with an odd smile and a blush, as she joined the group.

The scene was set : the characters very promising. But in real life, alas ! how unsatisfactory and incoherent is dialogue. Kitty could have made, she told herself, a fine drama, where all the characters were unmasked and swords drawn in two minutes ; characters ruined, the air rent with sobs and white arms raised to Heaven. And all that happened in reality was her father's dull introduction !

'May I present my good guest, Mr. Benedict, a visitor from France who arrived last night ?'

'My fellow-country-women, I think ?' said Father Benedict with a smile and a bow worthy of any court.

'But yes, and what a pleasure,' cried Aunt Etienne, 'to welcome a traveller from my beloved France !'

'That depends on the traveller,' remarked Madame. ('She hisses like a tragic character,' reflected Kitty, 'but only, I fear, from lack of teeth !')

'And what a pleasure to find such an England, Madame,' said the priest to Aunt Etienne. 'I have heard of fogs, I saw mists last night, but this is the spring of Provence, a poet's May !'

'You come from the South ?' demanded Madame.

'From the North and South. I have travelled much, Madame. Are we perhaps fellow-exiles from the same province ?'

'Our family comes from Brittany and I lived in Paris,' said Madame, her eyes set fiercely on Etienne's face. 'The wind's cold ! Wheel me in !'

'May I explain Father Benedict's purpose?' asked the Rector, dodging beside the chair on the narrow path. 'He wishes to seek for the records of the Priory, having an intimate acquaintance with others of its order in France, and some papers of interest about your own building?'

'He can see what papers he likes,' returned Madame. 'Mostly dairy accounts! Etienne, wheel me indoors!'

Kitty was standing by the low arch of the old gateway, half-screened by a bush of syringa. Her gaze was directed to Nicholas, who was talking eagerly to the priest, enthusiastic and fascinated already. She gave a little gasp as Madame's deep bass voice boomed out, close to her, in a harsh whisper.

'Remember to hold your tongue, Etienne!' she commanded in French.

'After all these years? And to a priest?' twittered Etienne.

'Especially to a priest,' returned the remorseless old lady.

Wasn't there, after all, something a little dramatic in that, thought Kitty, as she went off soberly to her neglected kitchen and store-cupboard, leaving the three men in happy controversy amongst the graves of the forgotten monks.

II.

Kitty stood on the top of the downs, looking down on the village and her home in the trees beneath. She had taken a long ramble over the hills, after a dutiful visit to old Agnes, the most repulsive and poverty-stricken of her father's parishioners. She took to long walks and unpleasant duties when she was unhappy, as regularly as some men take to drink, and to-day she was very unhappy indeed.

The weather and the view failed to cheer her as conspicuously as old Agnes' grumbles. Down in the valley, that morning, showers had scattered the chestnut and apple blossoms over the garden, in that sad, drifting elegy for spring which is the tuning-up of the orchestra of June. The rain was over, but dull, heavy clouds hung on the horizon, depressing and flattening every feature in the well-known landscape. The hills looked small and unadventurous, the hamlets squat and uninteresting in the darkening foliage of the June trees. Just below her, long and ominous, the chalk figure of the Lone Child of Silmington sprawled down the steep slope of the hill. Unknown hands had scratched the giant figure, this great

feature of the neighbourhood, on the smooth short turf unknown centuries ago: whether they were those of Druids or Romans might interest the Rector, but was of little concern to the villagers, who had a sound working principle that it was better to keep away from such uncanny haunts, and not to 'vrother with they.' Kitty had scrambled up and down its colossal limbs many times, laughing, with Nicholas, but to-day she could only shudder in memory of the dark tales of its past, and the human blood that had trickled in heathen sacrifices down to the copse and dewpond below. From the pond a shepherd's track ran down to the high road, and parallel to it, a few hundred yards away, ran the thick line of hedge which made the covering for the famous hollow way, that final haunt and hiding-place of the smugglers on their way from the coast. Kitty looked from that, too, with distaste, to the white ribbon of high road which swept between the downs and her home away over the hills to London.

That view was indeed the symbol of all that made her unhappy. Nicholas, she told herself, was being dragged from the gay, open, adventurous high road of life and human progress into the twisted, tortuous hollow ways of the past, leading to old evil ideas of sacrifice and superstition, and his leader was Father Benedict.

It was four weeks now since their guest arrived, and he had already made himself universally popular. Madame Brabazon was a certain exception, and Aunt Mary gave no hint of her feelings. But her father and Aunt Etienne admired him: the woman to whose homely cottage he had withdrawn, on the pretext that he was unwilling to tax the young housekeeper at the Rectory any longer, was his slave. The village accepted him, black cassock, skull-cap and all with surprising tolerance. And Nicholas himself was frankly bewitched by the new friend, whose interest in the lad was, indeed, obvious and unbounded.

'Why don't you like him?' Nicholas had asked Kitty long ago.

'Oh, I don't know! He's too watchful and urbane. He has a priest's face.'

'A saint, you mean,' corrected Nicholas.

'Not a bit! Eyes like a fanatic, or a saint, if you will. But he has a nose like a ferret and a mouth like a rat-trap. I don't trust him, Nick!'

She could not speak thus candidly to Nicholas now, and indeed she seldom saw him. With the Rector and Father Benedict he was engaged ceaselessly in the task of exploring the Priory. Old stone

niches and carved chips of pillars were collected, cement scraped off the walls to show the old beams and brickwork beneath. Papers and records were found in plenty, not indeed in the Priory but in an old neglected chest in the church vestry. Over there, collected on a long trestle table in the Prior's room, beside the old gateway, the three men sat and toiled daily. It was from these papers that they deduced that the coffins of the abbots lay hidden in the crypt, used now as a mere cellar for beer and cider. Madame was not allowed to hear of the discovery of a leaden coffin, but Aunt Etienne was beside herself with joy when a leaden case was found, containing, within an inner casket set with jewels, a revered skull. 'Tis a very holy relic,' said Father Benedict seriously. 'Our record tells that our order possessed once the head of the Blessed St. Anselm, and this may well be it!' The Rector had strong suspicions that Father Benedict held daily Mass before the relic, which lay now on the stone altar, discovered beneath rubbish and rubble in the crypt, but that, he told Kitty, was like the doings of the Gentry, no affair of his. To her, however, he deplored the absorption of Nicholas in the quest. The boy left the farm to his mother wholly now, and would hear nothing of hay-crop or market-days: his conversation was only of the old church and the marvels of the faith. 'He'll be tricked into his conversion, or into being a priest,' thought Kitty. 'Is that Father Benedict's real purpose or what does he really want? Oh, I do wish he would go away!'

Certainly, she thought, with a gasp of surprise at this point, the downs were possessed of evil spirits. For she had thought of the Devil, so she politely referred to Father Benedict, and there he was, black cassock and all. Quickly she crouched in a hollow to watch him: yes, it was indeed from the hovel surrounded with stunted thorn-bushes that he was emerging! That hovel, built by shepherds long ago, belonged to old Agnes: it shared the general taboo of the hill-side, for the old lady was a reputed witch, and only very occasionally did silly girls, in search of love charms, or old bodies seeking cramp-rings for rheumatism, venture to her filthy fireside. What on earth was Father Benedict doing with an old hag who hated all parsons and priests even more than she hated the rest of the world? And why was the black figure, its cassock fluttering in the wind, crossing now from the track and making for the hollow-way? Her surprise and curiosity awoke Kitty to cheerfulness. 'I'll do a little spying on my own behalf,' she told herself, and noiselessly and swiftly made her way down the steep

slopes, past the Lone Child to the smugglers' lane. The rain was falling lightly again as she pushed her way curiously into the big elder-bush at the head of the track : even if she were seen it would seem only natural that she was taking shelter ! And there, gazing down into the hot, dark, rugged footpath in its green tunnel of thorn and elder and hazel, she saw a sight so curious that she nearly revealed herself by a cry of surprise. The priest was sitting on a tree-stump, dusty and saturnine in the gloom, and by him on the ground squatted Jerry Tickler, in earnest conversation.

Old Agnes and Jerry Tickler ! Kitty could have laughed at the result of her first venture into detective work. A white witch and the most notorious smuggler in the place ! It is true that, owing to the conventions of the day, Jerry adopted the courtesy professions of rat-catcher, thatcher and well-digger. But everyone knew that his nights were occupied in far more profitable transactions under the directions of Stanton Collier, King of the Alfriston Gang of the Gentry. Both Kitty and her father had a weakness for the queer, dark little man with his twinkling eyes, ever since they had found him in a field with a broken arm, set it and nursed it well again. But no one could suppose that a holy father and Jerry could have much in common ! Cautiously she wriggled her way along the top of the bank beneath the undergrowth, till she was within ear-shot.

'Then we go on Thursday evening, between sunset and moon-rise,' she heard Father Benedict say in a low voice, as he rose and walked on down the hidden lane.

Kitty went home slowly, her mind too perplexed for immediate action, which was, for her, a most unusual state of affairs. Nothing is harder for the young to bear than mockery for foolish suspicions, or reproof for underhand ways. Kitty knew well that her father would laugh, and Aunt Mary shake her head, if she told them of her spying and eavesdropping. Nicholas would not listen, Aunt Etienne would excommunicate her. There was no one left but Madame Brabazon, and never in her life had Kitty exchanged a confidence with the huge, daunting, sharp-tongued old lady. She would wait and watch, Kitty decided, and only if other suspicions assailed her would she seek out this last refuge.

That was on Friday afternoon. On Tuesday evening Kitty was knocking at Madame's bedroom door.

'Who is that ? I don't want you !' was the alarming greeting which met the girl as she walked round a screen into the low room.

Downstairs Madame insisted, as widow of a Sussex farmer, on severe order and cleanliness. Up here she released, presumably, some spring of memory, and gave herself up to the ghost of her past. The room was a queer, crowded shrine of tarnished, dirty souvenirs. There was a dressing-table covered with a cracked lacquer toilet-set, empty flasks, brushes innocent of bristles. Brown ghostly wreaths of immortelles hung round the blackened mirror. Every chest and chair had its quota of dusty boxes and old laces: the mantel-shelf was piled with broken statuettes, cracked china, old shells and dusty fans. From the walls hung discarded dresses, and cloaks of dubious cleanliness and unknown antiquity. The sun was streaming into the room through the chestnut-tree outside, but the bed in its far corner was lit by two candles. Among its tattered chintz hangings lay the old lady, toothless and bald, her cap thrown back in the heat, her angry eyes darting out from her yellow face. The puce jacket, scarlet shawl and yellow laces decked her shoulders: on the bed-covering lay a dishevelled collection of her worn-out, tattered, many-coloured petticoats. It was indeed, thought Kitty, as if she were approaching the shrine of some battered old idol, lost in a grove of decaying over-blown flowers.

‘Well, what is it now? Haven’t I been troubled enough to-day?’ demanded Madame. ‘Hardly was I awake when my daughter-in-law came in to tell me that old Agnes had been found in her hut, dead, it would appear, of old age or starvation. You must have been the last to see her alive, I presume! Might Mary have a sheet for the shroud, she asked, as if I cared! I wonder if your father will give her Christian burial, my child. Her old grandmother, the witch, she would say was buried beneath the Lone Child, and good enough too! Well, well, some queer old stories have died with her! And, ever since, the whole house has been turned upside down over this silly tale of the hidden treasure! In plunges Etienne to say the holy Father has found a record of Church gold concealed at the foot of the Lone Child—“Then leave it there, says I, and bring me my gruel!” Then Nicholas comes about the great discovery, and how they must all go out to dig. Then your father comes with more tales and asking my permission to search the land. “Do what you like, but I’ll stay upstairs out of the way of all this hurly-burly,” I told Etienne. Then messages began to come that Father Benedict wished to see me. I’ve been turning him back all afternoon! I won’t have him here! He’s hunted and spied over every room in the place since he came with

his old records, but in here—No! If you've got him waiting behind you, you can go and be quick about it!

'I haven't! I hate him,' said Kitty, advancing to the bed.

'Oh, indeed! Then does Nick love him too well?'

Kitty blushed at the old lady's sardonic voice, but she held her ground.

'There are things I must say to you, that I can tell you alone,' she said.

Very badly she told the first part of her story, but it was with greater courage that she continued:

'And now, what's happening? Everyone's mad about this story of treasure hidden on the downs under the Lone Child, but what reason have they, what authority for it but Father Benedict's word? Did they tell you the whole story? He made his discovery, he says, last night. He left a mass of loose papers on his table, and, in the night, the wind blew them out of the garden. That was true, for there they were, all over the enclosure, and we all set to work to find them, in the forget-me-nots and the rose-beds; some of them had blown into the bushes, and I got two myself out of that great clump of periwinkles. But the paper about the treasure never appeared. "Oh, my fatal carelessness!" said Father Benedict, and he stood quoting the Latin of his monkish chronicle, to explain just where the parchment said it was: "Hard by the pond, over among the low bushes, six feet from the foot of the Lone Child." They have no doubts, but I have. Was there ever a paper at all? Isn't the whole story only some tale of Old Agnes, which he managed to get hold of? I could even wonder'—Kitty's voice sank—'whether he hadn't such good reason for wishing no one to know he had got the tale from her, that—'

'He put her out of her misery? Well, well, I wouldn't put it past him, my dear.' Madame spoke with complete composure, though Kitty was white and shaking.

'But even if that's not so—and I couldn't bear to think it, though certainly he last saw her alive—what does it all mean? What does he want? There is to be no search to-morrow because it is market-day. It can't be till after the milking-hour on Thursday, for he wishes Nicholas to bring up every farm hand to dig for him. That will be five o'clock, and on Thursday evening he means to make off in secret with the smugglers! Does he mean somehow to disappear with the treasures under our very eyes? How can he? Oh, Madame, what does it all mean?'

And then Kitty started up in horror, for quite suddenly the old lady began to laugh, leaning back with great hollow chuckles.

'If he knew, if he only knew,' she gasped. 'Not that he can, of course!' A spasm of fear crossed her face. 'No, no, how could he? But this treasure hidden on the downs! Pretty treasure indeed! Come here, my girl, come nearer. You hate him and I trust you. I must share this jest with someone! I've been waiting too long!'

That was Madame Brabazon's reserve of power, Kitty recognised with a sudden flash of intuition. The old lady had been waiting, ever since she first saw her as a child, waiting for something and for someone. Was it for someone who was worthy of what she had to give? Had she never found that person in her own son, the stolid Sussex farmer, and her grandson, who submitted so easily to varying influences? Had she always hoped to find in Nicholas courage or initiative for what?

'Yet another treasure have you, Madame?' she asked.

'The only one, silly child, worth a king's ransom too! It's a long tale, about a dead world, and the end of it all is here, in this little bag in my puce jacket'—her fingers fumbled with her mass of clothing—'and no one knows it, not even Etienne. Did you ever hear how I came to the farm? Ah yes, you have! I was maid to an English lady then, but none knew I'd been huddled out of France because I knew so much. I've kept it dark to this day and made Etienne hold her tongue, too, about our early years. For I was foster-sister, let me tell you, to the Countess Du Barri. Do you know of her?'

'Madame Du Barri? The King's woman? Who was killed in the Revolution?'

'Yes, yes. I was born near her and bred with her, and when she rose to power was her own woman. Ah, the stories I could tell you of courts and kings. But she judged I knew too much, and I annoyed her by ever taking the side of the poor and oppressed, and she sent me to England, taking my sister Etienne for her woman instead. Then she sent to recall me, but I was married, and she sent me tokens of friendship and letters. Again I loved her, as indeed all loved her when she was older. For she was a gay, friendly, wicked old lady, and the people on her estate of Luciennes, whither she retired on the old King's death, adored her. None stirred against her in the year 1789 and in 1791 she was still living happily in her great castle, flaunting her jewels and wealth,

with a lover in Paris if you please ! But once, when she was absent with him, thieves attacked her home. They were English, Madame believed, so to London she pursued them. She sent for me to visit her, in a narrow street of high red houses. "My God," says she, "it's dull !" "Yes, but safe," I replied. She got no news of her jewels before I came home again, and Etienne told me she raged and stormed, till at last she said she would give it up, and return to France. All the world said 'twas madness to venture into France again, but she held to it that no one would touch her, and that anyhow she'd rather die with excitement than live in dullness. So forth, she set, with her maid, Etienne, and on the way she announced that she was leaving Etienne behind with me.

"For you're too aristocratic for me, my dear," she says with her jolly laugh. Etienne was already full of her silly stories of our Breton family, you see.

'So the coach stopped at the farm door—'twas the very spring before my husband and son were taken—and Etienne sent into the house.

"For I must speak to you," she says, beckoning me to her. "You're the only woman I can trust and none will suspect you. I've got these back and you've got to keep them for me till I come again." And then she opens her travelling case and gives me—these !

The claw-like fingers fumbled at the string of the bag, and Kitty gave a little gasp as the contents were shaken out.

'Oh, the beauties !' she said.

The sun had sunk, and the candles needed snuffing, in the grotesque room of colours and shadows, but that did not matter now. For on the dishevelled bed the great necklace of huge diamonds sparkled and shone like a pool of fire. So living and so dominant they seemed that their beauty alone held Kitty captive. It was with an effort that she recognised their priceless value and their strange story, that these stones had hung round the necks of Queens of France and lived in stately isolation in royal treasure-chests !

'Father Benedict could know nothing of these ?' she asked suddenly.

'How could he ? Madame never revealed to anyone that she had recovered them through her agents in London. And think how old a tale it is ! When first I saw him I'd an idle fear that I'd seen his face before, and Etienne the same, but 'tis but imagination.

And even if he knew of the King's diamonds, see you, he knows nothing of our old days. If that fool Etienne had ever betrayed me I'd have known it, for she's transparent as glass, but it's only her spiritual lips she's licking over this priest. She never knew of the diamonds! I've kept them, thinking I'd restore to them first to Madame—and she was torn to pieces in '92—and then to the Cause, and it was lost. I thought I'd give them to my son to sell and make himself a great name with—but he was a mere clodhopper. I'd hopes of Nicholas, but any priest or woman can lead him by the nose. No, my dear! When my rheumatism is better you and I will go to London and sell them and take the town! We'll have carriages and jewels and silk dresses, and appear at all the routs and operas, and you shall marry a prince. I've no more to keep them for now, only first we must get rid of the priest!'

'But are the diamonds safe?'

'Safer here than elsewhere. I won't let Etienne out of my sight till Thursday evening, and do you keep an eye on the priest! It may be he's dirty schemes on hand with his treasure, but if your eyes are open he can do no harm on a bare hill-side with five or six men against him. Wait and watch as closely as you can, and I and my diamonds will look after each other!'

Kitty left the old lady chuckling to herself, but the girl went back to the Rectory in a maze of bewildered uneasy thought. In her dreams that night the diamonds sparkled over the poor shrivelled body of old Agnes, and Father Benedict stood on the Lone Child threatening Nicholas with a knife in his hand. And Kitty herself was flying desperately down the hill into the hollow way, only to find it blocked by casks of gold, covered precariously with the puce silk jacket.

III.

Thursday dawned at last, after a Wednesday of conflicting plans for Kitty. Twice she had tried to speak to her father, and twice she had failed. At moments she told herself that the affair was simple enough, that Father Benedict had really found the story of the treasure and had visited old Agnes out of pure pity, that the old woman had died of sheer weakness, that she had imagined the Father's words to Jerry, and that he had no interest save in the Priory and its family. And then at other times she saw Father Benedict as a villain entwining them all in some closely-woven plot, in whose dark ends a murdered old woman was of small account.

Suppose, by some extraordinary chance, he really knew of the diamonds, he who knew so much of Silmington before his arrival? Yet, if so, what did he hope to discover on the hill, and how could he expect to find them there? So Kitty had wearied her brain, and the only solution awaiting on Thursday was that, at least, when night had come, she would know everything.

The dawn foretold just such a day as would aid the Father's plans best. From a red sky the sun arose in that arrogant brilliance which foretold a storm by evening. Probably the weather would hold till the whole party was on the hill: it might well break in such a thunderstorm that he could make his escape unnoticed, in the rain and confusion, with the smugglers. So Kitty forecast the sky, but her father was more optimistic.

'A marvellous day,' he said, rubbing his hands, 'and a great discovery before us! More interesting for you, child, than the bones of saints!'

At the Priory there was some confusion. Old Madame Brabazon was said to be far from well, and Aunt Etienne had been ordered to stay at home in attendance. When the whole party collected at four o'clock Mary showed no inclination to join it, and Kitty, tired and anxious, volunteered to remain with her. From the Rectory garden she could watch the whole scene, 'and keep an eye on the hollow way,' was her secret thought. But when the Rector met Father Benedict at the door, very businesslike in girded cassock and thick boots, the priest drew Nicholas aside and spoke to him earnestly.

'Father Benedict hopes you will come, Mother,' said Nicholas, coming back to them in the parlour. 'He thinks your presence will encourage the farm-hands, who have shown such silly superstition and unwillingness to dig by the Lone Child. Kitty, you'll come, won't you, please?'

It was the first time for days in which Nicholas had used his old voice of humorous dependence and affection, and Kitty felt her eyes smarting, while her heart grew light and her suspicions grew shadowy.

'Why, yes, Nick, of course I'll come if you wish it!' she said.

It was as in a hard, clear, little picture that Kitty all her life remembered the scene on the hill. Great banks of ominous clouds already awaited the sun on the horizon, like a death trap laid for some lovely, shining bird, but in its full rays each figure stood out

in vivid precision on the parched grass and glowing chalk. Far away, down below in the village, stood a little group of watchers, dots of white and red and grey beneath them, attracted by curiosity, yet held back by legendary fear of the hill. Across the downs sprawled the Lone Child, silent, vast and threatening : in the sparse shade of the wizened, ill-omened group of thorn-trees at its foot were the farm-hands digging, their fears stifled by hopes of reward. In the sunlight their fustians and corduroys and tousled heads shone like the pelt of foxes, and above them all sat Mary, placid and white like a chalk boulder of the downs. The Rector and Father Benedict walked, talked and measured like two vast black-beetles crawling over the hill. Nicholas had chosen the most probable spot for the *cache*, six feet from the vast chalk foot, and Kitty had borrowed a spade to help him. They were so close together that she could not see how the scene centred in the pair or how the slim handsome boy and flushed pretty maiden in white were symbols, perhaps, of all those who had loved once on the hill, or of such couples as the dark Gods of fertility had demanded in sacrifice countless ages ago. A strange stillness encircled the group : no gulls swerved among them and the larks were still : the men worked in unhappy silence : only the noise of pickaxes and rattle of turf fell threatening on the sultry air. It was as if a magic spell fell over the party, and everyone started when the church clock struck seven. The sun was sinking into the clouds, but the thunder heat was hardly abated. Then, as the last chime died in the breathless air, there was a low rumble of far-away thunder.

‘The storm is coming : we should go home,’ said Mary.

But her words were unheeded. An instant later Nicholas gave a sudden exclamation and Kitty a little cry. The spade had struck at last on something in the earth, something that was neither chalk nor flint, that lay three feet below them in the soil.

‘That’s wood,’ said the Rector, and in another moment the whole party enclosed the opening with excited cries. The sheet lightning far away was unheeded, as the men gathered round with their spades, and set to work to enlarge the narrow hole. Even the Rector and Mary took up spades and joined the feverish group. No one stopped to look at his neighbour ; every eye was on the thing which lay below waiting to be released.

‘Keep your axes off it !’ shouted Nicholas, as the work grew wilder, but the frenzy of the party was beyond control. The first drops of rain passed unnoticed, and it was not till, as the clock

struck eight, that a deluge fell upon them and the opening, that the Rector said :

‘Come, come, we must leave it for to-day !’

But even as he spoke one of the men brought down his pickaxe at full swing at the piece of wood below, so thickly embedded in the turf. There was a hideous crash as the beam splintered up, Nicholas leapt down into the hole and as quickly climbed up, pale and sweating.

‘Tis a coffin !’ he said briskly. ‘Let’s go !’

‘Happen there’s treasure in it,’ cried a man, but the Rector shook his head.

‘It’ll be the grave old Agnes used to speak of long ago,’ he said, ‘of her grandmother that was buried as a witch. We may find more to-morrow, but——’

His sentence was never finished. Up the hill-side panted a village boy, breathless, trembling ; urged to them only, it was clear, by some threat from the group of villagers who were scattering in haste.

‘The Gentry are on the road a mile off ! Come down quick ! The Gentry are coming !’ he cried.

‘We must go, Father,’ said the Rector, in a voice which showed the urgency of the plea. Mary was already running down the hill, as if only now did she feel the discomfort of the rain ; the farm-hands were tumbling down it like empty barrels. Kitty and Nicholas were covering their heads, laughing, when the Rector spoke again.

‘But where is Father Benedict ?’ he demanded, puzzled.

‘Oh, where is he ?’ cried Kitty, an agony of alarm in her voice.

‘What’s the matter ? He must just have gone on first,’ said Nicholas. ‘Come, Kitty ! What is it ?’

‘He’s betrayed you, he’s betrayed you ?’ cried the girl.

‘Come, Kitty, don’t be silly !’ Already the Rector was far away below them, and in a forked flash of lightning Nicholas saw Kitty’s terror-stricken face, beneath her streaming hair, with annoyance. ‘You are wicked, yes, wicked, about the Holy Father. He is the best friend of my life, and my one ambition is to follow him into his Church, yes into the priesthood if may be ! This life here is too dull and empty for me, and the Church calls me. He came here to save me, Kitty. And why should you abuse him ? He likes you ! ’Twas but to-day he told me to be kinder to you, to pay you more attention !’

Kitty listened, as if the thunder on the hills had paralysed her for one moment and then she turned.

'Come with me, Nicholas,' she said imperiously. 'No, no, not there—by the hollow way.'

'But the smugglers,' gasped Nicholas, running beside her.

'There's another there with whom you must keep tryst,' said Kitty grimly.

Nicholas followed speechless. He let the girl lead him down to the top of the hedge, and fell down beside her under the elder-bush which guarded the lane. The sky was black now, and the noise of the rain obscured every other sound. In the dark steaming lane dead silence reigned, and they could only dimly see a huddled group of barrels lining its way.

'But whom do you seek?' whispered Nicholas.

'Go down!' hissed Kitty fiercely, 'go down there and wait! Before the Gentry come you'll find Father Benedict there. Ask him why he's going away in a hurry? Ask him what he's taking with him from the Priory, for he won't go empty-handed you may be sure! Ask him—Oh, Nicholas!'

Kitty put her hand to her mouth to stifle a sudden scream. An awful suspicion that was a certainty came over her. How long was it since Father Benedict had left the hill? Was it only for a few minutes, or had he slipped away in time to make a further search after a new object. Had he found out, could he have known, about the diamonds after all? Was the whole business on the hill a mere blind?

'I must go!' she shivered. 'I'll come back. Keep him with you. I won't stay!' She flung aside Nick's hand with a strength unknown to her, and stumbled across the fields down to the Priory.

Even as she reached the door she detected a sense of crisis in the house. She called, but no one answered, and there was no glint of light in any room below. Shivering, she ran upstairs towards the thread of light beneath Madame Brabazon's door. Little streams of water fell from her wet hair and dress as she ventured in.

And there, to be impressed on her mind for all time, she saw yet another of the vivid pictures of this awful day. No Madame Brabazon sat brooding there, but across the bed lay a huddled hopeless body which seemed to bear no relation to that flamboyant personality: one arm stuck stiffly out, as if in defence against some unknown foe. Over her bent Mary, pulling gently at the dreadful arm, and trying to cover the glaring yellow eyeballs which alone

looked from the distorted face. At the end of the bed, beneath two candles, knelt Aunt Etienne, her arms raised, her face a strange mixture of fear and exultation: the prayers she muttered were wellnigh drowned by the noise of the storm outside.

'If she is dead, she is safe, Mary!' she cried, as if Kitty's entrance woke her to sudden triumph. 'Before the stroke came God sent the Father here, and I brought him to confess her and give her absolution!'

Much later Kitty was to reproach herself, because the tragedy of the room seemed to her of small account. It was Nicholas who mattered, Nick's life and soul rather than the life in death, or death in life, of the old woman on the bed. She ran to Madame's side, and stared at the old puce wrapper. The little bag lay, torn from its lining, across her body, and it was empty.

'Pray for her soul, Kitty!' shrieked Aunt Etienne, but Kitty had turned already and run out into the storm. Across the road she ran, hearing, as in a nightmare, the sound of muffled horses' hoofs far away down the hill, at the bottom of the village. 'They'll take long to climb in this storm,' she told herself, as she broke desperately into the hollow way.

She ran up it, careless of pursuit or the sound of her footsteps any longer. The storm rose above all noises, and what did her discovery by the smugglers matter if she could save Nicholas first? Then, suddenly, she stopped dead, because she heard his voice.

'Oh, my father, how I have wronged you!' Nicholas was sobbing in his youthful contrition. All her life the scent of wet elder-bushes was to bring back that sound to her. 'Of course I understand, and will wait for you or join you. I am yours for life and death.'

'Stop!' said Kitty.

The tall youthful figure and the shorter stout one were before her in the gloom now, and stood still at her approach. It was Nicholas who stepped forward first.

'Oh, Kitty!' he said, 'how could you suspect the Father?'

But the priest brushed him aside.

'It was natural, my boy! Listen, dear daughter, I knew you had evil thoughts of me! You conceived that I had evil designs on the Priory. So perhaps I had! Perhaps I have done wrong. There was in the place, as I realised before I came, a treasure I desired to carry away with me. Other priests, other holy men, have done as I did. Here, in this secret place, I have confessed my fault to Nicholas. We found, as you know, the holy skull of St.

Anselm. Of what value was it to the household or to your village? None! Neither of you can know how the heart of a true Catholic is broken to think how such relics lie dishonoured in unknown earth, relics which can give health to the sick in body and immortal life to souls passing from earth. I stole the relic! To-night I took it, because affairs, high affairs of my unhappy Church and country, demand my immediate presence in London. Not even to Nicholas could I speak of my departure—the secret was not mine. God showed me the way of my going, by the hands of men who may be rough but will do me no harm and will keep my secret. I had left a message for Nicholas, as I told him, and I will return for him, for he is mine!’

Father Benedict’s voice was raised in triumph now, and in the gloom his eyes shone like a beast of prey. Kitty steadied her shaking limbs.

‘Did you leave the message with Madame Brabazon?’ she asked.

‘You have been to the Priory? You know?’ queried the priest. In the strange, green gloom of the dripping tunnel, Kitty could see him pull himself together, as at an unexpected blow. ‘Nicholas does not know of that sorrow, yet, poor boy. Yet he will know there is cause for rejoicing too! Nicholas, your grandmother was ill. Your Aunt Etienne who was, let me confess it, helping me to gather my holy relics safely together, told me so. I ran up to her room and I was in time to hear her last confession and give her absolution.’

‘You gave her that?’ said Kitty, ‘but you took something else!’

‘Kitty, be silent,’ said Nicholas harshly. ‘Would Father Benedict steal from a sick-bed? What had my grandmother that any would take? She’s nothing, all the world knows it, nothing! For shame, Kitty!’

‘But he did take something!’ said the girl. In a pause in her wild words she heard something which goaded her to desperation. It was the sound of horses, moving steadily and stealthily up the hill. Every moment was precious, and there was no time for fencing. With a sudden dart she snatched at Father Benedict’s arm, and seized the package, wrapped in sacking and tied with coarse rope, which he carried with such reverence.

The rope was insecurely tied, and before Father Benedict could intervene she had shaken the parcel open and was kneeling before

it on the dripping clay. As if Heaven were aiding her a great flash of lightning illumined this scene, the last of the strange drama. Father Benedict stood before her, grey and stricken, with clutching hands, and Nicholas stared, as if turned to stone at his feet. For there, in that dark hollow way lay, in strangest juxtaposition, the bleached human skull of a saint, and, sprawling across it, twinkling as if in vulgar triumph, the priceless diamonds of a King's Mistress.

It was Kitty who seized the necklace first and held it up, like a star, against the dripping hedgerows.

'That was what the Father came for, Nicholas,' she cried. 'That was what he tore just now from your grandmother's corpse. Here are the holy relics his heart's set on!' Her voice lost itself in wild sobs. 'Oh Nick, won't you believe me now?'

The horses' tread was coming steadily nearer and Nicholas shielded his face with his hands. Father Benedict stood up straight before them, and now, for the first time, Kitty admired the priest, caught in his trap, yet wriggling even now to free himself.

'I confess I have wronged you, my boy,' he said, 'but listen. These were jewels robbed from Holy Mother Church, I can swear it. 'Twas from a statue of Our Lady in Italy that King Francis of our land stole them long ago. They would, even now, help to restore the Church in my unhappy land and rebuild her glories. I took them from your grandmother in her extremity that this great gift might avail to save her soul. I took them for God's sake. Listen, I can explain all to you! I knew they were here, I confess it, for I too came from Luciennes where your grandmother and aunt served the Countess Du Barri. But it was only at the last I saw my way to take them for the Church. Forgive me, Nicholas! Come with me now and bring the jewels, for they are yours. Help me to rebuild the Holy Church of your fathers! Forsake all, I implore you, and follow me!'

'No, Nicholas, no!' whispered Kitty.

That was all which would come of the burning torrent of words with which she wished to expose Father Benedict and his tortuous wiles and certain crimes. It mattered little, however, for Nicholas had made up his mind already.

'No, I think not,' he said slowly, placing the diamonds in his pocket. 'Come, Kitty, we must scramble away up the hedge and escape the notice of Father Benedict's friends and fellow-thieves! No, sir, I will not go with you! I have had enough of hollow ways.'

IV.

Madame Brabazon did not die. To a lady of her temperament the first stroke was but a passing indisposition and she recovered all her faculties. She never remembered, indeed, the last strange appearance in her room of Father Benedict, or his theft of her jewels. There they were, in her puce jacket, when she recovered and there they remained. She professed great amusement over the fiasco on the hill-side, but to Kitty's relief she said no more of old Agnes, and looked upon Father Benedict as duped in his search of treasure by the Lone Child who guarded the hill. The story of Aunt Etienne's desertion she never heard, nor did Aunt Etienne herself ever learn what were the objects of her beloved priest. Both ladies read, in due course, in the *Daily Advertiser*, of the arrest on the high seas of a spy and adventurer in priest's robes. He had been, it appeared, a renegade priest in the time of the Revolution and in the Secret Service, later, of the Emperor Napoleon : at the time of his arrest he was travelling with money and jewels to Madagascar, in the hope of raising men and ships to go to the rescue of the exiled monarch. It was remarked that the priest had given information against many aristocrats in the revolution of 1789, and particularly against Madame du Barri, on whose estate of Luciennes he had once lived. He had been involved also in the original theft of the lady's jewels.

'So there's plenty of talk about my treasures,' whispered Madame to her beloved grand-daughter Kitty. 'We must wait till it's died down before our jaunt to London ! And indeed 'twould not be wise now, for an Excellent Reason.'

Kitty made no protest. Priests and jewels, treasure-hunts and hollow ways were all fading from her mind in her happy married life with Nicholas. They were completely forgotten when the Excellent Reason made its appearance at the Priory, and Madame Brabazon had to sit back to wonder whether this boy of yet another generation would be worthy of her royal bequest.

OUR LONELIEST ISLE.

By D. M. REID.

'Oh, these endless little isles! and of all little isles this Rona! Yet, much as hath been seen, not to see thee, lying clad with soft verdure and in thine awful solitude, afar off in the lap of the wild ocean, . . . not to see thee with the carnal eye will be to have seen nothing. . . .' Few indeed are the carnal eyes which see North Rona, lying as it does some fifty miles north of the Butt of Lewis, off the steamer routes and almost out of the way of the steam trawler.

The island is roughly triangular in shape with its apex towards the north and its sides each about a mile long. Parallel to the south coast there is a range of three hills. The eastern-most, the highest, is 335 feet high, while the others are of about equal height at under 300 feet. These hills and the whole island are covered with long grass, which extends practically to the edge of the cliffs. From this line of hills the ground slopes more or less gently to the cliff edge on the south. On the north the slope is very steep but ends almost abruptly in the long, almost flat, northern peninsula.

Very few places surely can boast of such a forbidding coast-line—'stern and rock bound' seems to be the most apt description available, and unless the weather be remarkably fine and the sea fairly calm, landing is a somewhat hazardous business. There are at least two places where landing can be effected when the swell or wind is great, but neither of these places can be found easily from the sea and one wonders how St. Ronan managed to land from the back of the whale which took him there. There is certainly no place where a yacht could be safely moored and probably only one place where a dinghy could be securely stowed. Indeed, the only safe thing to do is to explore the island from the sea with the aid of a pair of field-glasses. Once on the island, however, there is much of interest to be seen and more to make the explorer desire to get back to the mainland.

Landing may be effected, if the day is fine, at Geodh a Stoth on the north-east side. The landing is not very difficult, but even

though food and baggage is packed in small parcels, one is quite ready to rest by the time the goods have been transported to the top of the rocks. If it is desired to make headquarters in the old village, which lies on the southern slope of the western hill, the range has to be crossed. The ascent is steep, so it is not possible to carry much at a time and a good many wearisome trips will have to be made ere the home is completely furnished.

Let us hasten over the ascent—easily done on paper—and there comes into view what looks like a series of gigantic furrows running down the hill-side. On closer examination the furrows are found to be some 3 feet deep and may be about 4 feet wide at the bottom. Obviously they are the work of man, for they are bounded by the remains of a wall. Although no mention has, as far as I am aware, been made of these furrows by contemporary writers, they were probably called into existence for the shelter of the crops from the fierce blasts which sweep the Island. That the inhabitants went in for agriculture is well known, for, as far back as 1594 the High Dean of the Isles refers to the '*. . . faire beir meil*' and in 1819 MacCulloch says that '*potatoes, corn and barley grow well, and the crops were taken to Lewis twice a year.*' It is reasonable to suppose, then, that the furrows held the crops and the ridges protected them from the winds. This view gains support from the houses of the village, which lies on the west side of the cultivated area for, with the exception of the church, the houses are partly underground. The most typical and best-preserved house is the most southerly. Its main part is a large room some 15 by 20-feet in area and about 12 feet high. There is an obvious window-place in the south end and two doorways, one in the middle of the east and the other in the middle of the west wall. A roofed-in passage surrounds this room and it was only by this passage that the house could be entered. At intervals along the passage are low '*rooms*' on the outer side which, no doubt, housed the livestock of the householder. There is no sign of a fire-place nor chimney and one can only suppose that the fire was placed on the most convenient spot on the floor and a hole in the roof did duty as chimney. One other house, also in a state of fair preservation, has a definite fire-place and chimney, but it would seem to belong to a much later date, for it is not sunk, but is surrounded by great mounds of earth. The north side of this house is built against the wall of the graveyard—a circular area of no great size, but of great historical significance. It contains numerous ancient

crosses and monoliths, roughly hewn from the island's schist, and placed among them like a spectre of its age, a nineteenth-century artificial stone 'suitably engraved.'

Near the east side of the graveyard there is the chapel, now almost a total ruin. There is no definite record of its date of erection, but although it undoubtedly is old, its age is nothing as compared with the age of the Rona community. Into its walls were built stone crosses which must have been so old as to have lost any association with the builders, for it is hard to believe that the tombstones which could be clearly associated with an ancestor of the builder would be used as building material. Curiously enough the oldest building on the island is in the best state of preservation—I refer to the cell of St. Ronan. It forms the east wing of the chapel and is a curious structure, rectangular in shape and about 8 feet high with its two sides leaning inwards so that, while the width at the floor-level is about 5 feet, that at the roof is only about 2 feet. The doorway which leads into the chapel has been no more than 18 inches high, but is now partially blocked up with débris. In the same end there is a window space, small and very high up. This cell was built by St. Ronan in the eighth or ninth century and is unique in type.

As is usual in the case of the ancient saints, St. Ronan could not travel in the usual way nor was he beset only with the usual types of human troubles, but had others as well. He was stationed in Eorrapaidh (a village near the Butt of Lewis) but found the people there were altogether too wicked, so he prayed to be removed. After repeated exhortation his prayers were answered and he was told to go down to the shore. There a whale awaited him and took him to Rona. But the Saint's troubles were not ended, for the devil followed him and landed on the island; but becoming afraid or homesick at being so far from his friends (who, by implication, were at Eorrapaidh) the devil went down to the south shore and slipping down the steep incline, left the imprints of his claws on the rocks. In his anger he raised a great storm which bent the walls of the Saint's cell. Of course, the bent walls and the claw-like scratches had to be accounted for somehow (these scratches do exist). Some other more intelligent being who heard that tale and took the trouble to inspect the scratches, saw at once that the story was not an adequate explanation, for the devil would have had to slip down that cliff a good many times to account for all the marks. The tale was varied accordingly as follows.

When the Saint landed, he found the island inhabited by large hairy animals with great red eyes. He subdued them and drove them backwards off the island and as they slipped off down the rock they scratched it in an effort to save themselves.

So much for mythology. The cold light of science, however, assigns a different, albeit much older, origin to the scratches—the scratches occur in little groups on hard polished surfaces, known geologically as 'slicken-sides' due to a mass of rock travelling over, and in the process, burning and baking the surfaces in contact.

Of the religion of the inhabitants we know little. They were, of course, Christian, but I fancy of a unique brand. We do know, for instance, that they had in their chapel a plank with a series of holes in it, and in each hole there was a stone and every stone possessed a particular power in some direction. Probably, however, these stones were more in the nature of mascots than anything else, and so the islanders differ from the Christians of to-day only in that they put all their Gods under one roof instead of scattering them about on motor-cars and other conspicuous places.

If not quite up-to-date in religious matters they certainly were in social matters for ' . . . they have a kind of commonwealth among them, in so far that if any of them have more children than another, he that hath fewer taketh from the other what his number equal. . . .' This, of course, is what might have been expected, for it is one of the few relics of ancient Celtic communism which is still to be found on the mainland of Scotland. At the present time it is no unusual thing to find families among the north-west Highlanders who have adopted a child of a more heavily burdened friend or acquaintance. The traditional reason—the sharing of another's burden—has been obscured by the passage of time and the habit is explained on the basis that it brings good luck to the adopter. The best luck that can befall a man is to bring home a child from some port when he is at the fishing.

Despite the apparent loneliness and isolation of this little community its members were more than satisfied with their lot. This is clearly shown in two recorded instances, the first of which relates to the economic law that their island would not support more than thirty people. If the population increased to thirty-one, somebody had to go to the mainland. At such a parting there was great grief shown for the exile, who was looked upon as almost

a Martyr. The other instance was towards the end of the period of human occupation.

At that time MacCulloch visited the island and found one family of whom he says '... though the women and children were half-naked, the mother old, and the wife deaf, they appeared to be contented, well fed, and little concerned about what the rest of the world was doing.'

The question of food was easily solved for, as has already been indicated, the soil is good. Water also was plentiful and there were several good wells close to the village. Let me insert a word of warning here. Let no hardy explorer go to North Rona fortified with an Ordnance Survey Map and expect to get drinking water (or even any kind of water) in all the wells marked. Most of the wells are still to be found, but those which are not dry have been used for about a hundred years by the gulls and may be located by their smell. There is, however, one good well, lately cleaned out and protected from the birds.

NATURAL HISTORY.

Very little natural history work has been done on the island and that little in a most incomplete manner.

The geology was sketched over by MacCulloch, who describes the island as being composed of Gneiss alternating with bands of hornblende schist and traversed by granite veins. He notes the presence of great numbers of large and small garnets in the hornblende schist, and remarks on their badly shattered state. In general he compares the geology of the island with that of the neighbouring island of Lewis. One of the phenomena which struck me was the presence of a 'storm beach' of great boulders on the west side of the northern peninsula. This beach rests on the top of the cliff, and slopes upwards as a bank about 15 feet high. Some idea of the magnitude of the waves which strike the island may be gained from the fact that the cliffs there are some 30 feet high and are vertical, and that the storm beach is composed of boulders, not shingle!

On the more protected eastern side of the south-west promontory there is the remains of a genuine '25-foot Raised Beach' composed of a mass of particles of the surrounding rock cemented together and lying on the cliff at that height above sea-level.

On top of the rock which forms the core of the island there is a varying thickness of good soil which supports a great crop

of grass. This, in turn, provides feeding for more than 150 sheep throughout the year. The sheep, of course, are not wild, as has been stated, but are put on the island for the grazing.

In describing the natural history of any given locality, it generates a feeling of smug satisfaction to be able to say 'I know every species of this or that group of animals inhabiting the locality,' for it is obvious that then you are one of the very few fortunate people who know all about something. Rona gives me that feeling, when I am asked what land mammals there are and what they feed on, etc. Then I feel a wave of pride and say: 'Oh, land mammals,—there are none!' Not a hare, not a rabbit, no, not even a common mouse!! Just fancy, you can leave your cheese on the floor for a week and, provided, of course, it is not one of the livelier brands, it is there as you left it when you return. It is not so easy as one might suppose to adjust oneself to this absence of rodents, for despite knowledge, it is difficult at first to get out of the habit of looking for high and inaccessible places on which to place the edibles.

Although land mammals are few, sea mammals are plentiful. The seals are to be seen everywhere, but in largest numbers among the rocks on the north end of the island. The seal in question is the grey seal (*Halichoerus grypus*) and not the common seal of the mainland coasts. The grey seal is bigger than his more common relative and has a far less intelligent head. The first view of a grey seal forcibly and uncomfortably reminds one of a wet polar bear in the Zoo, and the absence of bars does not in any way increase the desire to remain till the brute is sufficiently near that all doubts may be resolved! Like all seals, the grey is harmless but inquisitive and cannot be approached very closely without his taking fright.

The only other mammals are the whales which occur not infrequently, but they are usually too far off for anything like certain identification.

Naturally enough, to think of a lonely island is to think of sea-birds, and since Rona is the very type of a lonely isle, its bird population is a necessary adjunct. To see Rona on a map makes one think of birds, and once there in the flesh it is impossible not to think of them. They simply thrust themselves on your notice day and night—but more of this later.

Let me say first of all that there is no scarcity of birds—I will not say millions, for I've no idea whether my estimate would

then be out to the extent of a mere hundred or five millions. They did not even cover all the rock, for I could see quite a lot of it. Anyhow, there were quite sufficient.

The most noticeable thing about them generally is their tameness. The Kittiwakes sit on the ledge and look at the intruder once and lose interest in him. The puffins appear astonished and hold debates in whispers and waddle about and seem to be giving the whole situation their very serious consideration. They show a deep interest in any work which may be going on in their vicinity. For instance, when the one possible well was being cleaned out they sat round and discussed the matter in some detail. They were interesting and solemn friends and took no liberties, although they must have the maximum liberties taken with them. I refer to that scourge the great black-back gull. On Rona there is quite a colony of them and, judging by the great numbers of extroverted puffin-skins lying all over the island, they must use the puffin as a regular item in their diet. It would give me real pleasure to thin out the black-backs, as they thin out the puffins.

Another harmless inhabitant is the adult fulmar petrel, which is common. I say adult advisedly, for the immature form is one of the few curses of the island. Young fulmars are abundant. There is one under almost every rock, at least one in every house and three in St. Ronan's cell. There they sit, like great white powder-puffs and wait for the passage of the unwary. When he comes within range the bird opens its mouth and ejects from its stomach about a table-spoonful of nasty yellow fulmar-oil. The aim is surprisingly good up to about three feet. Once this oil is on your clothes you may as well burn them, for though the smell is not terribly offensive, it tends to linger. Indeed the whole island smells of this oil, for the ground must be saturated with it.

I am told on good authority that the oil materially aids in the fattening of the sheep which are forced to eat it with the grass.

Although I have said that the young fulmar is one of the curses of the island, it becomes almost one of the amenities of the place as compared with its lesser relative, the forked-tailed petrel. This scourge lives in burrows in the roofs of the houses and remains quiet all day. Once you have got yourself comfortably tucked in for the night and have at last really got to sleep, these birds begin to take a hand in things. First of all they sit round in a circle and talk to each other in an extremely loud voice which

sounds something like this—Pui-e-e-e brrrrrrrrr—, the later part like a very bad and very prolonged gear-change. This ultimately, after a series of nightmares, wakes you up. While you are still trying to adjust your ideas to account for it all, something walks unhurriedly across your face and reaching your forehead says 'Pui-e-e brrrrr—' and all your returning senses fly to pieces and you make a wild grab and catch nothing. And so the night goes on. You needn't bother to get up; it is useless to chuck things about; shouting won't help—it certainly won't drive the birds away, although it may drive you another step towards insanity.

To one who has never experienced it, a night with the fork-tailed petrels is one of which the discomfort—one might almost say horror—can hardly be described.

The land birds are not well represented on Rona. A few pipits and one flock of about thirty starlings are about all. The starlings are a fat and contented lot, for they feed on the ticks on the sheep and on the vast numbers of the daddy-long-legs which live on the grass. I venture to think that these insects would support a much larger flock of starlings without causing undue overcrowding.

Such, in brief, is North Rona, once the home of a happy and contented community, now given over to the birds and the seals. Such also is the fate of St. Kilda, where in a few short years the birds will be astonished at the sight of an intruding human being.

WHEN HOMER NODDED.

BY ROGER MAITLAND.

THE afternoon lecture was over, and three students made their leisurely way from Alexandria's Museum to a sandy foreshore that faced the lofty Pharos. Aristarchus had delivered the third of his epoch-making pronouncements on the unity and superb quality of the Homeric epics, and conversation naturally hovered round this theme; but it was evident that one at least of the three differed from the great critic's judgment. Ageratus, the eldest, was aghast at such audacity, and said so with a good deal of emphasis. Who was this upstart, a mere new arrival from Lesbos, to challenge an Aristarchus? 'It would be more seemly,' he growled, seating himself with some dignity on a convenient sand-hill, 'far more seemly in a new-comer from the islands to accept the conclusions arrived at by the first Homeric scholar of the age. I don't know your name, sir, but I hope you will allow a senior to advise you in these matters.'

The offender, unabashed, flopped down alongside him and sprawled ungainly-wise at his feet, head between hands. 'My name,' he said, 'is Hellanicus, and I am not aware that any Lesbian need bow to a man from Samothrace. In the Library yonder you will probably find several volumes of historical research embodying the work of a fine old ancestor of mine. If I quarrel with your master, my friend, it is because this ancestor of mine knew a great deal more about Homer than Aristarchus does. As a citizen of Mitylene, it was his business to collect all Lesbian traditions of the best poet who ever lived there; and very remarkable stuff much of it was. Just to back my judgment, that you object to so strongly, I don't mind unloading a little of it on you.'

[Here follows, in a fairly faithful translation, what Hellanicus proceeded to tell them :—]

The wandering and irresponsible genius whom it is convenient to call Homer put off marriage till quite late in life. He had by nature very little use for women, whom he regarded as a cumbrous form of household utensil that always got under the feet of heroes

at awkward moments, and spoilt good fights either by sentimentalising over them or by 'butting in.' No passage in all the *Iliad* gave him more sincere pleasure than the mishandling of Aphrodite; to his last day he regretted that the episode was not of his own conceiving.

By the mid-forties, however, he began to feel that it was time to settle down. His last ten years had been unlucky; in several of his regular 'pitches' the audiences were tiring of his lays and demanded new stories, in others there had grown up a weird crew of peace-advocates who charged him with attempts to militarise the youth of enlightened Ionia. In despair he had employed his talent on dance-songs for children; he had stooped so low as to bargain with an Association of Ceramic Artists, demanding pay in advance for a Potters' Anthem; he had even, during one horrible year, joined a troupe of raw-voiced community singers with no respect for genius, who had exploited his unfortunate myopia by featuring him as The Old Blind Minstrel from Chios. Luckily he was released from that hideous bondage by a nervous breakdown at Mitylene; and there, having in delirium stentorionally recited the Death of Sarpedon, he attracted the notice of a Lycian music-teacher employed at the Mitylene Girls' High School, the same that was in later years famous under the headmistress-ship of the poet Sappho.

The Lycian girl, who prided herself on being an important and exceptionally talented member of the Lesbian intelligentsia, nursed him through convalescence into a comfortable and thoroughly intelligentsiac relationship which she camouflaged with the name of Secretary—and occasionally, in view of her own rather vague Oriental connections, with that of Chela, a word mysterious and therefore intensely respectable in Ionian ears. His own protest against what he felt was a feminist inhibition of his cherished vagrancy she met by constituting herself deputy-reciter of his lays in her own and the neighbouring girls' schools, and at the many feminine symposia that were in those days a feature of Lesbian society. When he pointed out that male entertainers were not necessarily excluded from the symposia, she had her answer ready:

'But you, dear, are so very male! No decent matron would dare invite you to her house. Ionia has quite enough Homerides already.'

'Well, of all the —! Aulé, you know perfectly well that that

is merely a catch-name for advertising purposes. I assure you, my dear, my lays are my only progeny, nor do I wish for any other.'

'Don't be silly, dear. Of course I know it, and you know it ; but no one else does. What's more, lots of their mothers would swear it's true. That Chian hussy Phigalé for one, and Myrto here . . . and I've heard there's a girl in Tenedos—no, my dear, you won't persuade any lady on the coast that you can be trusted alone with a girl, or with any number of girls. You leave the recitals to me, and you needn't do a stroke of work for the rest of your life ; besides, they all say it's so thrilling, so feministically inspiring, to hear the great battles hymned in a deep, rich contralto. If you must do something, why not put the lays together, make a book of them ? There's money in it, I know.'

The notion had its invitingness. If only Aulé had kept to her side of the bargain. . . . But she couldn't keep her nose out of his occupation. She was perpetually breaking in on him with suggestions. There was a new girl at the school, from Corinth or Epidaurus or one of those little townships across the *Ægean* (one couldn't be expected to keep track of every petty outpost, however well it might suit him to make up flaunting legends about their old families) . . . anyhow this new girl had money and lots of girl relatives, and it would do the school a great deal of good if she were flattered to some extent. What had that to do with him ? Impatient creature ! She was coming to that, if he only wouldn't interrupt. This sweet girl had brought with her a family lay about some ancestral cousin of hers . . . wait a minute ! Diomed, that was the name. Oh, he knew all about Diomed, did he ? well, why hadn't he had the sense to do a really first-class lay about Diomed ? The Cressida scandal ? what had that to do with it ? they were probably all the same, those heroes of his, Diomed no worse than the rest. (It was after this exchange of sentiments that Homer revised, and considerably strengthened, several of the passages between Zeus and Hera.) Anyhow, Aulé concluded, the long and the short of it was that, if he would polish up the stuff and include it in his new book, the girl would be frightfully pleased and he and the school would both profit. And, mind you, not a word about that disgusting Cressida affair ; he must stick to the family's lay for facts, and not introduce any of his own.

It was a bitter pill, but the poet swallowed it. Middle-aged

and physically comfortable, and never quite himself again after his breakdown, he let Aulé have her way. After all, the Diomed stuff was good *epos* material; it would be very difficult to get it quite into line with his own lays, but very few people, he reckoned, would notice the difference when they heard it sung (he never fully mastered the implications of production in book-form). Further, Aulé had developed a new set of innovations that foreboded far worse interference; she was altering his text, sacrilegious devil! Calmly asserting that her audiences had grown tired of so much mere fighting and wanted a little more human interest, she was inventing speeches for the combatants—long-drawn-out tirades about their opponents' past lives and family troubles that sounded like nothing so much as the scandal-mongering tittle-tattle of the symposia. If any hero, he felt, had really entered on a speech of that sort during a fight, either the other man would have speared him and gone away before the first sentence was ended, or the rest of the army would have marched over both their bodies and carried on with the war.

That feminine sophistication of his work did anger him, and for days together he remained unapproachable; indeed, the book he was engaged on when he first heard of her goings-on (the one we now know as Book X) was promptly flung into the fire, and it was Heaven's own mercy, she admitted later, that it encountered a bucket of water on the way and so put the fire out, giving her a chance to rescue the manuscript before much damage had been done. But when he declared that not a word of these unauthorised and absurd maunderings (you can see how angry he was) should be allowed to appear in the rolls of his complete work, he met with a stubborn opposition that bade fair to overcome him. Who did he think was going to read his work? Not the men; they were content to hear the lays sung—and you could easily make suitable excerpts for mere singing—and had more important things to be busy with when they were sober. The children, perhaps ('I have great hopes,' said Aulé, 'of getting a condensed edition put on the official list of Readers suitable for schools; I will say, my dear, that on the whole your moral teaching is inspirational and well-directed'). But the women would be his best-paying public; and women would never accept an edition with the new speeches left out.

Homer settled the question by dying unexpectedly. Then for the first time Myrto hinted (the report has been satisfactorily

traced back to her) that Aulé's descent was Lemnian rather than Lycian. At several symposia the rumour gained credence; but it lacks authenticity—and why should a Lemnian have been attracted by the *Sarpedon-threnos*?

Aulé, for her part, resigned her post at the High School and announced that she would devote the rest of her life to bringing out her poet's Complete Works in a thoroughly revised but entirely unexpurgated library edition. She appealed for—and in many cases obtained—the patronage and the cash of such descendants as the Homeric heroes had found it possible to leave behind them; but the girl who had a cult for Diomed was her steadiest and most active backer. Myrto tried to rouse a feeling in Mitylene against the editing of 'their' poet by strangers from Lycia and Argos, but was defeated by the obvious counter that Homer was not 'their' poet at all, being in fact an Ionian from down south. The only practical result of her efforts was that Aulé took great pains to delete from her revised text all *Æolic* phrases and forms that did not too intimately affect the metre.

It was a singularly untroubled and self-sufficient symposium that met in Aulé's chamber to initiate the revision. The hostess, of course, opened the proceedings. Her aim, she explained, was to give to the world a poem really worthy of the hero they all lamented—what she might perhaps be allowed to call the ideal *epos*, instinct at once with the virile temper of old Danaan warriors and with the penetrating pathos of true femininity. Her dead lover (here she nobly refrained from breaking down) had allowed her already to infiltrate his martial narrative with passages of a more tender humanity, and she hoped to continue the process step by step. It seemed crude, for instance, to bring so noble a work of art to a close on the purely militaristic and almost brutal note of the slaying of Hector; she proposed to add a couple of cantos dealing with the belated repentance of his slayer, and thus to leave readers emotionally purified with deep human pity.

Iphianassa, the Argive girl, who had for some minutes been fidgeting on her chair, could not be further restrained. 'Look here!' she burst out, 'we must get things straight from the start. I and mine are providing most of the finances, and we want something for our money' (at this point the Lesbian ladies shuddered ostentatiously at the Westerner's barbaric phraseology). 'I tell you at once I've a friend who specialises in *epos*—most of that Diomed lay is his—and he has a good deal more that we think

must go in too. If Aulé is willing to give us a share of the new matter, well and good; if not, I don't say we shall, but we may reconsider our money contribution.'

At this point Ageratus sat up and broke in. 'Before you go a step farther, Hellanicus,' he said, 'what exactly are you driving at? Do you really suggest that we are to believe all that, or any of it?'

'I suggest nothing,' said Hellanicus. 'I have dramatised it a little, but in all essentials I have merely given you the facts of whose truth my ancestor had, after a great deal of research in the family archives of Mitylene, convinced himself. And I will add'—he stood up suddenly and spoke with a good deal of feeling—'that if anyone, even your friend up at the Museum, thinks *our* Homer was responsible for the wretched ghost that was Aulé's notion of the noble Patroclus, such a critic condemns himself from the start.'

Ageratus sniffed sulkily and threw himself back on the sand-hill, closing his eyes to imply that he took no further interest in all this nonsense. The other student, speaking for the first time, ventured a timid query. What about the *Odyssey*? Wasn't that Homer's work?

'That!' Hellanicus laughed out loud. 'That, surely, has Aulé written all over it. She all but published it under her own name, so proud she was of it, but her fellow-editors put pressure on her. Why even Aristarchus doesn't see it I can't understand. I suppose he doesn't know much about women. Well, we Lesbians do; that's why we leave home.'

And then he was gone, nor was he ever seen again in Alexandria. Ageratus, still sniffing, didn't miss him. The third sat staring out across the harbour; he had not noticed the sudden departure, but, when he found Hellanicus no longer there, he shivered and bowed his head.

'What are you muttering?' growled Ageratus.

The reply, thrown over his shoulder as the younger man moved away, was merely a verse of the real Homer:

'*Ἡ δ' ἀνδρὶ κέλετ' Τρώων κατεδύσεθ' ὄμιλον.*

THE LOST CONSTITUENT.

BY J. LESLIE MITCHELL.

MIRZA MALIK BERKHU was born in the hut of a Nestorian silversmith in Mu'adhan in the year of Our Lord 1200. Ten years after his birth he was sold as a slave to the Janissaries Regiment of the Pultow. . . .

This is no tale of mine, you understand, but one transcribed and edited from the wordy chronicles of Neesan Nerses, sometime Nestorian Bishop of a long-vanished diocese in the Persian hills north of Sar-i-Mil. It is one of the earliest and shortest of his tales—those fabulous pseudo-histories leavened with ingenuous moralisings little to modern taste or the point generally. Living in an unliterary century—he began writing about the year 1245 in the Gregorian calendar, though twelve years earlier according to his Julian reckoning—he had no competitors to fear, and in his darkness of medieval ignorance knew nothing of the vivid phrase or the startling opening. No living reader but would skip the first three thousand words and fifty years of narrative to reach Baghdad of the year A.D. 1250, on a morning of the second date-harvest.

A city colourful enough that morning, as the Bishop paints it: banner-hung, crowded and prosperous, with its sheen of lacquered minarets and gilded towers, its Tigris a rippling scimitar in the sunlight. Half the palace guards had ridden out an hour before sunrise to bring the conqueror in from his camp beyond the Western Gate. They had ridden out, stout young men who had never known war, with much beating of drums and clanging of gongs, to the amusement of an irreverent populace already thronging the streets. The shouted advice and aspersions of the Baghdadese the Bishop records with unclerical zest, but the passage is best left untranslated, especially as it delays both the action of the story and the passage of the sleek and sulky guards. Men with grievances, the guards. They had ceased to count. They were out of favour, forsooth, because that unquiet fool Mirza Berkhū was returning from one of his wearisome victories.

Their private thoughts they appear to have kept to themselves,

however, the while their captain spoke a long address of welcome to Berkhu at the head of his dusty and saturnine troops. Berkhu himself greeted the address with a sardonic grin. In chain-armour, six feet in height, mounted on a black Arab, his nose under the peak of his Christian hat looking more beaked and aggressive than ever, he rode beside the captain under the archway of the Western Gate. And there indeed he half-halted.

‘What’s this smell?’

The guards’ captain smiled sourly. ‘Roses,’ he said.

Rose-scent it was. The Baghdadeses had surpassed themselves in preparation for the return of their hero. They had had camel-trains of roses brought from the surrounding suburbs, and with great blossoms, white, yellow, red, had hung River Street in scented curtains. Berkhu was almost startled, though he recovered quickly enough, and thereafter for nearly an hour rode forward between parallel banks of screamed approbation and showering favours, till his horse and armour were smothered with roses. Once he glanced up towards the gleaming heights of the Citadel—the palace where, as boy-slave to an entire regiment, he had been lucky to steal as much as three hours’ sleep a night. . . . But God! how he had slept! Never such sleep as then!

Black faces, brown faces, small wizened yellow faces, even—those last the faces of little Hun traders from the remote north. So, amidst a kingdom of uplifted faces, rode Mirza Malik Berkhu, First General of the Caliphate, a Minister of the Divan, a poet, a heretic, and a notorious lover and wine-bibber. Fresh from the slaughter of raiders on the borders of Turkestan he came, and at either saddle-horn dripped a dozen severed heads: heads of hideous raiders whose kin would yet very terribly avenge them. But of that Berkhu suspected nothing. Nor would he have cared greatly had he done so.

Hideous heads. They might give thanks to God they were freed from the necessity of embarrassing their owners. Dead. They who had been quick now very slow. What had happened to them?

And, staring down at the trunkless dead, for the first time in his life he found himself thinking of life. He had been too busy living ever to think of it before. Living—since those days as the slave-boy in Citadel. . . . Weariness and sleep, thirst and satiety, dust and boredom—unceasingly, unendingly. Life; his life. All life? Nothing else in it? Or had he mislaid some ingredient that

might have transformed the whole to a thing like—like a bugle-cry in a camp at morning ?

Sound without earache ? . . .

So, the bored General in fantastic speculation, he rides through the streets of Baghdad and the lengthy prosings of Neesan Nerses, who arrogates to himself considerable knowledge of the happenings inside Berkhu's head, and approves them not at all. They were, one gathers, wrong-headed.

The palace gates : Fanfare of trumpets, the carpet of state, dismounted procession. And there, within the great rooms, remote in that building like a worm remote in the woodwork of a cabinet, says Nerses, Berkhu came into the presence of the Caliph. A little, dried-up man, white-faced, the Caliph, and as Berkhu prostrated himself with clash of chain-armour he sat a long while considering his general. And Berkhu knew himself very near to death, and grinned sardonically in his beard, considering the floor under his nose. He had become too popular and well-loved in Baghdad. Besides, the mullahs had been at their work against the heretic.

Presently the Worm-King spoke, and at his words guards and pages, saints and sinners, dwarfs and diviners who enlivened the lighter hours of Muhammad's successor, withdrew. Then Berkhu heard himself addressed.

'Rise, General.'

So they faced each other. The Caliph was blunt.

'I had no need of this victory or campaign. The populace forced it on me. Nor have I any need of you. So you do not return to your army.'

Berkhu laughed. It was characteristic of him, this unseemly levity, says Nerses. 'Not even my head ?'

Now those two had once been friends—long before, in the days when a gallop across the sands and the strife of spears was like wine in the mouths of their youth. And they peered at each other in that dusk and scented room, and the Caliph sighed.

'O Malik, we've come far, you and I, since those morning rides to Baqubah. What have they given you, all those years that have passed since then ?'

'Fools to fight and much weariness to endure,' said the heretic General, and also was blunt. 'But not so much as they have given you.'

The dried-up little man who ruled Islam nodded. 'That is true. Now the weary should rest. For me there is none, but for you——'

And again he considered him, and Berkhu thought amusedly of the dripping heads waiting outside on his saddle-bow. But that memory of the Baqubah rides had disturbed the Caliph's intention.

'You will retire to your palace and garden on Tigris-bank. There you will remain until I give you leave to come forth.'

Thus the little Worm-King, looking in Berkhu's mocking eyes. Then the General made another prostration, rose, and passed from that room—passed, indeed, from all the colourful life of Baghdad, and for ten long years, in macabre pursuit of life's own secret, was remote from it as the dead.

II.

But that pursuit began not at once. The first few months of exile merely accentuated his boredom—though Nerses gives it a more theological name—to an agony almost unendurable. Wearied though he had been of camp and field, his army and command, never had he known such weariness as that endured, day on day, in the great blue-painted rooms of the Tigris-bank palace. They were set with gilded screens of fine *mushrabiyyeh* work, those rooms, hung with Persian cloths, their floors mosaic'd by the cunning hands of Shiraz workmen. In one of them multitudes of chryselephantine statuettes, idols of pagan gods and spoil of a raid on raiders of the Hindu Tiger King, stood to peer unholily from floriated niche and lacquered pedestal upon the flowing of the Tigris. Fountains sprayed in the inner courts—fountains in eternal cannonade of besieging legions of lilies through the early summer and of roses and mimosa in the intenser heats. The garden-scents haunted Berkhu even in the remotest cellars to which he betook himself.

But he also wearied of wine very quickly. He wearied of the innumerable palace women, their squabbles and their lusts. In his library, unrolling from their scrolled silver cylinders the tales and romances of Arab imagination, he found no surcease. Rest from himself—there was none. What rest indeed had any man ever found from himself except in the blind restlessness of youth?

So for three months, while in Baghdad the indignation and curiosity over his dismissal began to die out. Within six months, his army dispersed to the limits of Irak, he was forgotten as hero and conqueror. Over-clouding that once burnished reputation arose another.

The heretic General was engaged in sorcery.

III.

It was a common enough pursuit in that age and country and the word covered a multitude of darksome activities. What led Berkhu into his quest of the life-essence Bishop Nerses—who at this point mysteriously abandons the narrative and involves himself in an entirely irrelevant denunciation of the Latin Rite—only hints at in a belated and hurried aside. It was a devil-inspired memory of the dripping heads that had hung from his saddle-bow and the aching speculations they had aroused.

Life, this burden and weariness of days and years—yet if a man could re-live it deliberately might he not search out some secret certainty and splendour to light the years as with a torch? If youth came twice. . . .

Slowly the hope kindled. At first his studies were little more than an amusement—a bored amusement. He had a great Riverwards room sealed to his own exclusive use, and there immersed himself in such Satanic literature as was then available; and might never have passed beyond such harmless whiling away of time but for the fact that a Greek slave from Istambul, newly come into his possession, discovered himself a chemist of some little note and considerable pretension.

Instantly he was impressed into the service of Berkhu's private room, absolved from all other duties, and promised his freedom when, by creation or rejuvenation, they had run to earth the life-formula.

Abiogenesis was as favourite a dream of the pseudo-savant of that time as it is of his successor of this. The Greek's private opinions are not recorded. Probably they were highly sceptical. Nevertheless, he taught to Berkhu all he knew, and, having been wrung dry, found himself relegated to the position of sweeper-up and bottle-washer the while his amazing pupil went on into mysteries the Greek had never essayed—not even with the aid of the still-unproven algebra.

Days swept seaward on the southern flow of the Tigris, according to the poetical but unastronomical bishop. Weeks followed them into months, into years, and remote, unapproachable in his palace-wing, Mirza Malik Berkhu, once the first soldier of Islam, still climbed and adventured unceasingly amidst the ghoulishaunted slopes of sorcery.

What he had begun as an amusement, a relaxation, had become

an obsession—a fact which tempts Nerses into a lengthy disquisition, unnecessarily Freudian, on the psychology of the Devil. The quest of youth, the life-essence, the life-formula, had beckoned him through experiment after experiment. Gradually the immense treasure accumulated during forty years of campaigning was largely dissipated, though the Tigris-bank palace continued to house some hundred women, guards, slaves, and parasites unclassifiable. The Greek assistant had died and his place been taken in rotation by innumerable others, drawn to Baghdad by rumour of fabulous reward. One by one they had been tested, found wanting, and dismissed—renegade mullahs, shamans from the far North, even, according to Nerses, Buddhist priests from remote Thibet. Their promises and formulæ wilted under performance, for, however otherwise changed, Berkhu remained disconcertingly practical even in his sorcery.

He had had an immense furnace installed in the room of the chryselephantine statuettes—heat being a natural corollary of hellish studies, according to his chronicler—and appears to have gathered together a laboratory equipment of tanks and test-tubes and coolers extraordinary enough for his day. He had progressed from his first crude experimentings with the bones and blood of this, that and the next animal to the attempting of more complex syntheses. The furnace would whoom, the retorts bubble reddishly, and the sorcerer and his assistant of the moment pore over charts and diagrams the while some new concoction—the brain of a slave, the poison-sac of a cobra, poppy-essence, mandragora—seethed to an odoriferous spume. Then would come the testing of its efficacy: Berkhu had strong belief in testing the results on his assistants, and the emetics of the time, much in demand after each test, were crude and forcible. It was seldom an assistant stayed for a second experiment.

But Berkhu went on undiscouraged, through list after list of unhygienic recipes, the mildest ingredients of which seem to have been the livers of wolves and the hearts of bats. Until that phase passed also. The ingredients fined down. The sorcerer General was on the track of the simple, elemental things, amazed that he should have neglected them.

He had great bouquets of flowers brought to him for dissection. The laboratory was turned into a hothouse for the forcing and observation of innumerable seeds which sprang overnight, strangely manured, into sudden plants. And these, in turn, were culled and

ground and pounded into nauseous mixtures which sometimes maddened and sometimes slew. . . . And still the secret eluded him.

Yet, looking back over his experiments, a strange conviction grew upon him. Again and again, by a score of different routes, he had neared success in manufacture of the life-essence—but for the discovery of a single constituent. Mysterious, unnamed, unsegregated, this lost ingredient slipped betwixt the bars of formulæ and tests. Again and again. . . .

In research a forerunner of the moderns, he abandoned his furnace. He had a new laboratory built on the roof of his palace. There, in the blaze of the sun, great crystals were erected to concentrate light into pools of wine and water and oil and liquids unnamable. Sometimes the wavering gleams from the palace roof would scare the strayed stranger in Baghdad's streets at night, the while Berkhu experimented with the radiance of the full moon.

And still the secret eluded him.

And outside Baghdad advanced the Mongols.

IV.

But Berkhu was deeper in the devil's toils than ever, says Nerses. He cared nothing for Mongols, but only for his search. A long-forgotten figure began to appear in the streets of Baghdad, to wander the heat and dust and din of the daytime bazaars, the soqs of the cameliers who came from the Gulf of Ormuz with pearls and sandalwood and outrageous travellers' tales, the quarters of the Persian poets, the kennels of the Somali dervish-troupes. At night the drowsy mullah would start at sight of that wanderer on the floor of his mosque, some ghaffir shrink into his doorway at sight of that beaked, thin nose and sardonic, searching eyes. The heretic General had abandoned his palace roof and gone out into the world in quest of the lost constituent.

If neither in blood nor bones, drugs nor scents nor sunshine lay the secret towards which he had struggled by so many roads, might not the ultimate bridge to it, this last evanescent ingredient, abide in some creed or phrase or stanza, all unwitting its own power?

But neither in fable nor fantasy, incantation nor dogma, the droning of the mullahs or the screamed revelations of epileptic dervishes could he find a clue. Nor by purchase of Christian scripts and long poring over the forgotten creed of his childhood did he find

it. For, as Nerses sententiously points out, he sought not life eternal but youth on earth. His was the quest not of the humble heart but the golden grain—to recapture the years of the slave-boy in Citadel and with that as beginning upbuild a life full, perfect, unhaunted by a mysterious weariness and frustration.

And then a dreadful fear came on him and all one night he tramped the palace roof-spaces in agony—albeit a questioning, sardonic agony still. How if the lost constituents of the life-essence he sought and the life he had lived were the same? He himself—perhaps it was he who was at fault. . . .

He fell to a night-long examination of himself, under the circling stars, with far lights twinkling meaninglessly on the Persian hills and once or twice vexing him from his inquisition. What did he himself lack that the life-essence eluded him? Except youth, he had everything: Courage, strength, passion, ardour even yet, wit, fantasy, invention. Love he had known, hate he had known, fear, exaltation, hope. . . . Everything. What dream or desire in the minds of men had not been his?

Women?

Next morning he abandoned his hermit-existence. He emerged into the life of the palace again—a procedure which struck the palace with the amazement due to a divine advent—had his principal wife garotted, the rooms cleansed of her lovers and favourites. Then, in this last pursuit of the lost constituent, he indulged in such debauch as the palace had never known even in its heyday. He clad himself in fine robes again, feasted on delicate foods and wines, and sent out his steward to the slave-market to purchase women. There was less selection than of old, but they brought him gorgeous creatures still—white Circassians, damask-skinned Persians, dusky and sly and spirited women of the mountains. And in their arms, in wine and laughter and song Berkhu still searched unavailingly for the golden grain.

And the Mongols drew ever nearer.

V.

They were battering at the gates. They brought up great Chinese bombards and hurled jagged rocks into the city. Their battering-rams clove in the Western Gate and they poured in and swept the Janissaries back. Then the Worm-King, roused from his half-life in the Citadel, fled across the Tigris and across the desert.

Mutinous, disordered, the Janissaries made but a half-hearted defence against the attacks of the yellow plainsmen. Then, in that hour of desperation, says Nerses, the populace remembered one who would surely save them, one who had been the Lion of Irak, greatest of generals.

Their shouting filled the streets below his palace and he awoke from a long meditation and went to the wall-parapet and looked down. At that the shouts redoubled. 'Berkhu! Berkhu! The Mongols—save us!'

And Nerses tells that they swarmed into the palace, kneeling in desperation and entreating him, and slowly, coming out of his dream, he listened and understood.

'The Mongols at the gates! God, why was I not told? Go back, you scum, go back and hold them. I'll follow!'

He drove them from the palace, all except a young captain of Janissaries who stayed to guide him. Then he turned and shouted for his attendants. But the palace had emptied overnight. Men and women, lovers, lackeys and favourites, they had fled across the Tigris in the wake of the Worm-King. All except one old woman, toothless and bent. She heard his shouting and came, bringing him food and clothes and armour. The Janissaries' captain had vanished down a corridor to watch from a window the swarming tumult by the Western Gate. And as Berkhu buckled on his chain-mail with the help of shrivelled hands his heart rose high and singing within him. He glanced at the face of the woman and dimly, hurriedly, tried to remember that aged, rheumy face.

'I do not remember you,' he said, snatching the scimitar from her hand.

She raised her head and looked at him, and, strangely halted, he stared back.

He remembered her then. He had thought her long dead. She was a Caucasian slave, the first woman he had ever possessed. . . . Years before, in the dawn of time. How she had hated him, how loved! That he recalled, and himself of those days, and suddenly, says Nerses, some sealed and secret chamber seemed to crumble within his heart.

'Do you remember those years, Saith? I—' he heard himself, an unwonted liar, with amazement—'have forgotten them never, nor all the wonder you gave me then—'

The Janissaries' captain was at his elbow. 'My lord, my lord, the defence is broken again!'

Half-blinded, the old General found himself with the young man at the palace gate. There he had sudden thought and gripped the Janissary's arm. 'See to her—that old woman who tended me.'

The Janissaries' captain stared. 'What old woman? *It was some young maid.*'

Then the tumult of the street-fighting came up towards them, and Berkhu rode towards it, wondering, and took command of the flying Janissaries, and hurled the Mongols back. But behind, at three different points, their horns were blowing and the fires rising. Twice was the Western Gate cleared only to glut again with the ingress of fresh hordes, and Berkhu knew that he and the city were doomed. He drew his cavalry together and charged once more, still brooding, and then, says Nerses, in that final mêlée some realisation seemed to come upon him. He half-wheeled round, the old Lion of the River, back towards his palace, as though some secret amazing was revealed to him at long last. He shouted incomprehensible words.

'O God, the lost constituent!'

And then the charge of the invaders swept over him, and the Mongols slew him and planted his head on the Western Gate. And they took Baghdad and slaughtered therein for many days.

PEACE.

BY F. McEACHRAN.

It is now many years since Aristotle saw the end and beginning of all things in a Mover who remained unmoved, or since Plato found it in the contemplation of the Eternal Idea, but it is curious to reflect how recent is the time when these conceptions, ancient as they are, began to fail. For with some truth in Western Europe at least, we can aver that from 400 B.C. till A.D. 1800 there has lived no European but would agree in finding the end and aim of human existence in either rest or contemplation, and would approve of the action of the Creator in resting on the seventh day and finding his work good. And if questioned closely as to what he meant by this rest or this contemplation, he would have answered that it was some sort of peace, and that of all things which this life or the next had to offer, it was the highest and the greatest and the most to be desired.

To exemplify this truth we will turn to a number of writers of the centuries of the past and having quoted from them proceed to deal by way of contrast with the new attitude which has been adopted by writers of more recent time. Earliest of all was the Plato we have mentioned, and most representative of all the figure of Socrates depicted to us by Plato in the last days when lying on the couch of death. Now it is striking to note, in view of our subject of peace, how little in any modern sense Socrates does, and how much he allows, calmly and serenely, to be done to him. He stands, as it were, in the centre and allows the world to revolve round him, being content to watch it revolve. And while it revolves, very patiently he talks to it, occasionally listening to its words of praise and blame, but steadfastly all the while, refusing to budge from his place. He will not leave the city which destroys him, and having like a soldier taken up position at the post to which he believes the gods have appointed him, he calmly remains. When, moreover, at the end of the *Apology* he speculates on the world to come, he asks for no spheres of higher activity, nor for more work to do, but only for another Athens, where, face to face with the heroes of old, he may continue to talk, and to let the world

revolve. And the talk, we may be sure, will be no idle talk, for it too has, as an end, the end of wisdom, and in the quest of wisdom Socrates knows that peace will come.

With Aristotle the problem is sharpened and even raised, metaphysically speaking, to a higher level. Behind the eternal flux, the unceasing flow of Heraclitus he, Aristotle, sees intuitively the Parmenidean One, the Unmoved Mover who remains, and the life which is that of the gods he places in this quarter. Yet the Unmoved Mover, though constant, is not idle, having much to do, for on him and round him countless worlds revolve. They revolve, whereas he remains, for what they seek he has found, or better never lost, the peace which lies at the centre and which is the source and finality of unrest. It is ineffably calm, with unspeakable unease around it, but there is no doubt where the real power lies. And if we descend from the higher to the lower, from the Unmoved Mover to the Unmoved Man, we find in Aristotle that human peace may be found in like manner. For as it is said in the *Nicomachean Ethics*—

‘Happiness is thought to stand in perfect rest. He that works in accordance with and pays attention to Pure Intellect seems likely to be both in the best frame of mind and dearest to the gods. For the working of the gods, eminent in blessedness, will be one apt for contemplative speculation, and of all human workings that will have the greatest capacity for happiness which is nearest akin to this.’

With these words we will leave the ancient Greeks, knowing that although the blessed and uncaring gods of Epicurus likewise are in peace and the perfect man of the Stoics forever remains untroubled, these are but degenerate and super-refined forms of the older doctrine of Socrates.

It is perhaps a curious thing that this same peace should have been sought and found by an obscure race such as the Hebrews, but seek it they did, and unheeding of the Greek quest for wisdom, found something which, with all its moral sternness and ethical fiat, is strangely like it. For even Job, harassed and tormented to an extent unsuffered by Socrates, sits likewise in the centre, and though more painfully, like him watches the world revolve. ‘All this is not real,’ says Job in substance, ‘there is more beyond the seeming,’ and while Elihu and the others anxiously would prove that the seeming is the real, Job sees through the revolving

of unreality and penetrates right to the centre. 'Though after my skin worms eat this body,' says he firmly, 'yet in my flesh shall I see God.' And so again, whether in this world or the next, we are back in the peace of contemplation, face to face, the Unmoved Mover and the unmoved man. As a completion of which Hebrew thought we need hardly mention the greater Job who lay unmoved on the Cross and who said, with reference to those who were over keen to do, 'forgive them, for they know not what they do.' Like Socrates and like Job he did not 'do' but was 'done to,' yet power was with him and not with the doers. Yet if ever a man who was 'done to' was busy with the business of the world, it was he of the Cross who did less and yet more than any man born.

But leaving antiquity and turning to the Middle Ages we will draw our example from its greatest poet, from the vision of Dante and the three worlds through which he passed. Here at last we are moving, and there are many episodes in Dante, and much of what he had to say, which seems opposed to the peace we find in rest. The hero goes on a long journey, from the top of the earth to the centre, from the centre to the Purgatorial Mount, from the Mount up through the nine heavens, than which perhaps never journey was longer nor greater height ever scaled. But the end is curiously like the end we have made our own, for beyond the nine heavens there is a point of rest, and on this point the worlds depend. In fact, we have here Aristotle and Plato once again, Socrates and Job hand in hand, and in that one point which Dante for a moment saw in ecstasy, there were metaphysics, beauty, wisdom and suffering, and withal such bliss in the seeing that the horrors of the way seemed as nought. When as Paul says, 'We are face to face,' and when as Christ says, 'It is finished,' there is no more work to be done, but the contemplation which ensues is so busy that 'this threshing floor which makes us all so proud' seems a petty place in comparison. Now before we come to our modern days this is first to be noted. All these we have mentioned in their various ways look towards an end, not to a beginning, and they seek to explain man not by his origins but by that to which he aspires, and on the nature of this aspiration they are not at variance. We shall see shortly that it is the turn to the beginning which is the crucial point in what we may call the descent of man from the peace he once had, to the unrest he suffers from to-day.

There are in truth only two ways of explaining man and his destiny and no more than two. Either he rises to something or

he derives from something, and since we have shown in a few words what in the past he thought he was rising to, we will now try to show what in the present he imagines he has risen from. There are many ways of doing this and the roots of the matter are manifold, but it is best exemplified from a philosophical point of view in the doctrine of the two seventeenth-century philosophers who are most in repute to-day, Spinoza and Leibniz. There are in truth others, among whom we might name Francis Bacon, who are responsible for diverting men's thoughts from this 'end' to the lumps of matter which surround us, but as they are men of inferior fibre to these two we will neglect them and deal with the two men quoted. Now of these Spinoza in a sense looks back, whereas Leibniz looks forward and both stand at extremes in their attitude towards the problem we are trying to fix. Spinoza no less than Aristotle looks to an end, and his ideal man is the Stoic sage who remains unmoved. So much he has in him of the past. But in another direction he looks toward the present age, by dissolving man into the flux of nature and in no wise allowing that man can be dear to the gods. His god, which is nature itself, has no will and no desires, and is indifferent to apotheosis or crucifixion, and his ideal man, though he enjoy peace, is without hope. For the human peace of Spinoza is not the renunciation of the world which brings perfect rest, and the 'hilaritas' he mistakes for serenity is the peace of rocks and stones. So saying we will pass on to Leibniz who, more than Spinoza, turns his face to the origin and away from the end, bidding good-bye to the rest we call peace. For Leibniz the universe is a plurality of points, of monads in unceasing activity from the highest to the lowest without break, and in this world of development from top to bottom we look in vain for a centre. For one of these monads, or a bundle of them, is man, his destiny being to develop towards perfection, and in this monadic activity an end is made of rest. So the pace is set, and modern science with its unceasing movement and unresting research has kept it going. Since Leibniz there has been one world poet, Goethe, and in his works we will look for the new ideal. Bearing in mind the new doctrine we shall not be long in finding it.

It is, in fact, to be found in *Faust*, the greatest, if not the maturest work of Goethe. For we must remember that there were two Goethes, the Goethe who found peace in activity, the prophet of the nineteenth and twentieth century, and the Goethe of later life who found it in rest. The second was perhaps less of a poet,

but he was an older man, and with age it is said wisdom comes. The first was magnificent for his poetry, but weak in doctrine, and if ever man has mirrored the feeling of his age and of the age to come, Goethe has done it. For *Faust* is looking not for rest, but for unrest, and seeking in his youth the symbol which counters activity he terms it Mephistopheles, the evil one. For the first time in the history of the world the power which puts a break on action is regarded as evil. This was a bold move to make, but it was to become the characteristic of the age after Goethe, and if in truth the devil be 'Der Geist der stets verneint' we can say with confidence that he has been driven from this modern world of ours, leaving us with the unbridled and unrestrained doctrine of the deed, 'die Tat,' instead of 'the word,' 'das Wort,' which once was said to have been since the beginning. And so *Faust*, as a symbol of the modern man, makes unrest his blessedness and satiety his damnation, sweeping like a whirlwind through the world, and destroying in his path Gretchen in the first part and Baucis and Philemon in the second of the epic drama which is *Faust*. We are far enough away from our Socrates who 'does' not but is 'done' to, and even from Dante and the Platonic spectator of eternity. More than these, particularly in view of the epic nature of *Faust*, it is important to note that we are equally far away from heroic epics of the wandering sort, the *Aeneid* and the *Odyssey*, where unreflectingly it might be thought that the hero wanders aimlessly like *Faust* over sea and land. But on close scrutiny this is seen not to be so, for neither of these, whether Aeneas or Odysseus, is seeking unrest or denying the quest for peace. Ulysses, we remember, is going home, from the edge of the world to the centre, and once home it is peace that he desires. Only Tennyson in the nineteenth century could send him off again to 'sail the western seas until I die'; and even Tennyson very probably got the idea from Dante, who showed clearly how sinful and how destructive such a desire really was. And as for Aeneas, it must be borne in mind that he too is going home, for once uprooted from his Trojan city, his aim is to plant the Penates in some other home and having reached it, there to remain.

With *Faust* as we have seen it is otherwise, and in unceasing activity he grows old, till a day comes when the wager he made with the devil must have fulfilment. The wager is this, and it is in the typically modern vein. The devil must satiate *Faust's* activity, and if he can do it and cause *Faust* to say 'it is enough,'

or words which are equivalent, then Faust is conquered and the devil has won. Now it happens at the end that Faust does at the close of his life find satisfaction, and in the peaceful occupation of draining marshes for the future colonisation of man he finds in a sense his quietus. He also says the very words which are to seal his doom, but he says them with reference not to the present but to the future, implying that if ever he were to bring men to dwell on this marsh and be at peace, then he too would rest, and by this verbal trick, in which the inference is that the future never comes, he is saved from the hand of the devil and carried off to spheres of new activity. There, no doubt, he will continue to improve the worlds beyond and so on till the end of time.

It cannot be denied that the vista so opened is of transcendent beauty, but it is remote unfortunately from the peace which lay at the centre and which was found in rest. The key to the whole problem lies, as many of us will know, in the rising belief in Progress which was first born in the eighteenth century and expressed in the formula of the infinite perfectibility of man. It promised no world of ideal beauty as Plato had promised, nor any Christian heaven of Dante, where we shall see no longer darkly but face to face, nor any divine centre as in Aristotle, where the gods are in peace all their days, but instead a prosperous to-morrow and a coming Utopia in the future. Goethe, in point of fact, seems to have been influenced by the theory at the time when Rousseau was overcoming Voltaire and 'thought' was at a discount against 'feeling,' which is why Faust, among many other things, says that 'Gefühl ist alles.' That age was indeed glorious and all voices, seeing how near the Utopia of Progress seemed to be, were descanting on the beauty and goodness of the world. But alas for feeling and its rapid changes. A generation or so later when 'activity' and 'progress' had been found wanting we hear another song, with a Leopardi saying instead that 'the world is muck,' and a Byron, Shelley and other Weltschmerz prophets despairing of it likewise. Now it is striking to note before we turn to what Socrates would have said, that Goethe himself did not remain in the Faust stage but developed to another end, pronouncing in old age no longer that 'Gefühl ist alles' but instead—

'Alles Drängen, alles Ringen,
Ist ewig' Ruh in Gott dem Herrn.'

(All striving, all struggle
is eternal peace in God the Father.)

For in later life Goethe became a humanist of the ancient type, seeking, no less than Socrates, his peace in rest.

And to conclude with Socrates, we will say only this. The world, as the first Romantics said, is marvellous, and also as the 'mal de siècle' had it, it is muck, but it is both of these at one and the same time. Out of the 'muck' the 'marvel' rises, as it rose for Socrates on the couch of death, or for Christ on the cross. For the world of human beings does not grow old, and as Montaigne said, 'If you have lived one day you have seen all.' And so, rejecting the belief in progress and the good time supposed to be coming, we will find our peace as God finds it, not in a better to-morrow but in what the world provides us with to-day.

HOURS IN UNDRESS.

XII. FINIS.

It is always difficult to write 'Finis.' For twelve months, by the courtesy of the Editor and the patience of the readers of CORNHILL, I have had the privilege of spending an hour in undress with the best audience in the world—the audience loved by Thackeray seventy years ago, when he wrote his 'Roundabout Papers' in the editorial chair. I, too, have loved that audience, which, through all the changes of the years, is still genial, and cultured, and responsive to the mode transmitted by the first Editor to his successors. I may say this, now that I am taking leave; now that the twelfth hour is striking, I may say how much I owe to that tradition. It has helped to establish the contact which the diversity of my topics might have broken; for I have tried always to write for a single reader. Years ago—half-way back to Thackeray—Lord Glenesk, who owned the *Morning Post* when I joined the staff as a recruit, advised me to abstract a reader out of his multiple subscribers. 'You will be writing on many subjects,' he reminded me (I was going to succeed the late George Saunders in Berlin) 'and you should aim at unity through your audience.' I was to imagine one constant reader, whether the duty of the day led me to write on phases of German politics, society, art, drama, sport, or aught else. The old newspaper-proprietor's rule has guided me through these 'Hours.' I have imagined one reader of CORNHILL, and, if his features and characteristics excite the curiosity of the rest, let me add that he brings a breath from the hills where Langland drove his plough, in the wonderful fourteenth century, which was the April of England's year. Like Chaucer, he is familiar with town manners, and, like the countrymen of both poets, who saw the world opening out before them, he has grown up to its endeavours and ideals.

I am thinking here particularly of a passage in Dr. Edmund Dale's *National Life and Character in the Mirror of Early English Literature*,¹ a book with a cumbersome title which is not widely enough known, and which should be studied in conjunction with Dr. Williamson's *Evolution of England*,² mentioned in an earlier

¹ Cambridge, 1907.

² Oxford, 1931.

'Hour.' Dr. Dale tells us of that aspiring century, that it was 'an age of desire, and satiety seemed wellnigh impossible. The Englishman would know all the sciences under the sun, and all the subtle crafts; and in his quest for new ideas he is indefatigable, turning over and over the contents of the Latin, French and Italian literatures, and making their thought his own.'

I take comfort from the record that the learning might be 'fearfully inaccurate,' and that it was even doubtful 'how much of all the professed chivalry was real'; but I observe that

'as in Chaucer's pages we have the life of the people portrayed, so in Langland's we have the ripening conscience. . . . There was a feeling abroad that the peasant had his rights as well as his duties, and that he had not been at all well treated. . . . Langland shows Peace pleading before Parliament against Wrong, his oppressor. . . . The scales are falling from the Englishman's eyes, and the wrongs he sees sit heavily upon his soul.'

Here is the evolution of England at a glance. True, it was seen in a dream—it was all a dreamland in the fourteenth century—but the dreamer fell asleep, we recall, on a hillside in Worcester-shire, whence still come statesmen to Westminster. For

'the Englishman,' adds Dr. Dale, 'has never been so completely idealistic as to stay long in the midst of dreams, and now the awakening has come, and with it the Reformation is known to be at hand.'

So it was when the readers of CORNHILL were first being fashioned, and so it is with them to-day. To write for that ideal reader has been an arduous task, but, feeding his desire, I have not been too much afraid, in turning over the contents of foreign literatures, to expose my imperfect scholarship. For this Englishman is more charitable than pedantic, and more eager for the spirit than for the letter of learning. So I have ventured, however ill-equipped, to discuss 'Translation,' '*L'Entente*,' the tragic patriotism of Josephus, 'Science and Faith,' 'The Social Heritage,' 'History and Politics,' and all the fabric of Langland's dream, confident in the recollection that he roused himself from it, not in order to verify his references, but in order to seek his country's good. It was a dream with a purpose, like that of the old King of Egypt, and its interpreters, like his, have made our laws.

To this quest there is, of course, no 'finis.' Generation after wakeful generation, the Englishman, in the course of his evolution, 'leads,' or is led,

'Through widening chambers of surprise to where
Throbs rapture near an end that aye recedes,
Because his touch is infinite and lends
A wonder to all ends.'

Thus, though 'prophecy is not the business of the historian,' as Dr. Williamson, the historian of that evolution, warns us in the final paragraph of his book, yet Clio may accept succour from a sister-muse, who will answer affirmatively the question with which 'it is perhaps more permissible to end. Democracy,' says Dr. Williamson, 'has fulfilled many of its pledges. Can it continue to honour them and hold what it has won?'¹ We might even word it less discreetly—was not Mr. Ramsay MacDonald a person in Langland's dream? And still not hazarding a straight reply, we might hint obliquely at an answer by citing a passage written some thirty years ago by a skilled interpreter of the mind of Europe—that dream on a hill in the fourteenth century:

'Now that the fogs of a crude moral theory are dissipating,' we read, 'and the dream of a mechanical Utopia, a mere nightmare produced by a surfeit of science, is passing away, it is time to remember our ancestry. Our proudest title is not that we are the contemporaries of Darwin, but that we are the descendants of Shakespeare; we too are men of the Renaissance.'²

A dream within a dream, we observe: the nightmare of universal evolution oppressing the dreamer on the hill, when the Reformation was known to be at hand; a nightmare robbing him of his destiny as a herald of the Renaissance, yet traced to a surfeit of the science which that Renaissance was to bring. Evolution is a tricky word. There has been a descent of the Englishman as well as a descent of man, an evolution of England as well as of humankind. Sir Arthur Keith may dispute with the late Sir Walter Raleigh the relative claims on our pride of Darwin and Shakespeare, but not the most obstinate Darwinian will frighten Shakespeare away.

I suspect that Sir Arthur Keith, in his Rectorial address at Aberdeen, was reacting, quite comprehensibly, to a Victorian repression. 1931 was rebelling from 1871. Sixty years ago, when *The Descent of Man* was noticed in the *Quarterly Review*, the reviewer affected to rise from it 'with mingled feelings of admiration and disappointment.' He sought for 'some consolation for the

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 473.

² Sir Walter Raleigh, *Some Authors*, Oxford, 1923; p. 121.

injurious effects which this work is likely to produce on many of our half-educated classes,' and he hoped that 'Mr. Darwin may yet live to furnish us with another work, which, while enriching physical science, shall not, with needless opposition, set at nought the first principles of both philosophy and religion.' Reading this review as it was written, and taking Darwin as a type, and Darwinism as a science, rather than a contribution to it, the whole moral obliquity of nineteenth-century thought is contained in these characteristic utterances. It invented the 'opposition' which it deplored. Let knowledge increase, the reviewer said in effect, and let it enrich—the word had a tang—the particular fields which it cultivates; but it must trail across the sky of its bold and free observation a few of the illuminated texts which weaker brethren interposed between the vision and the scene. Its May-Queen must die to slow music. Sixty years afterwards, Sir Arthur Keith, Darwin's most granite disciple, avenges this faint and partial praise. Still maintaining the still 'needless opposition' between 'physical science' and 'philosophy and religion,' he reverses their effective claims. He forgets that 'our half-educated classes' are thronging Oxford as well as Aberdeen, and are completing their education along both lines. He forgets that the teaching of religion did not all come from the theologians' camp, and that Huxley, in 1871, the very year of *The Descent of Man*, supported by speech and vote at the School Board for London the resolution proposed by W. H. Smith, afterwards Leader of the House of Commons,

'That, in the schools provided by the Board, the Bible shall be read, and there shall be given therefrom such instruction in the principles of religion and morality as are suited to the capacities of children.'

He supported it, according to his son's memoir, not because it was his ideal, and not admitting glosses from theology, but because it appeared to be the best working compromise in the circumstances; and it is precisely this sense of compromise, and of the need for a synthesis of studies, which we miss in Sir Arthur Keith's address. For he forgets, too, the fate of his hero. 'My mind,' wrote Darwin in 1876, 'seems to have become a kind of machine for grinding general laws out of large collections of facts'; and, without falling into the vulgar error of mistaking this handicap by ill-health for a common retreat from the humanities, or Darwin's special consolation by science for a universal rejection of art, it is yet legitimate to observe that such loss, in his own judgment, 'is a

loss of happiness, and may possibly be injurious to the intellect, and more probably to the moral character, by enfeebling the emotional part of our nature.' A more deliberate specialisation may lead more directly to such exclusions.

There is, therefore, no end to the history, some minor aspects and side-shows of which it has been my privilege to discuss in these 'Hours in Undress.' The idealists dreaming in the hills and the statesmen interpreting their dreams, as they awake to Renaissance, Reformation, Revolution, War, and Reconstruction—to epochs of concentration and expansion, as Matthew Arnold called them in literary terms—succeed and will succeed one another, and Dr. Williamson's question will get answered by an evolution under the sign of 'Evolution.' We shall not make a bog of a name. There were evolutionists even in Langland's day who might have destroyed 'the ripening conscience' in the ear, and who might even have scared away fair 'Peace pleading before Parliament against Wrong, his oppressor.' For there are always 'evolutionists' so conservative in their faith, and so fast tied to a name, that they would estop every ripening hope and every liberal plea, whether of peasants in the field, or of nations leagued to restrict the causes and diminish the means of war. As there is a type of religious mind so stubborn as to consent *tantum suadere malorum*, so it is with a type of scientific mind. Human nature persists through changes of creed.

What would be interesting, if I had the time and knowledge, would be to try to take the development of certain ideas which have been constant factors in the making of the mind of Europe. The examination might show that the path of evolution is not always as straightforward as some professional evolutionists suppose, but that it goes back in places on its own tracks. Take, for instance, the ideas sublimated, or, as some would say, ridiculed—there is often only a step between the two—by Tennyson in the last century: 'courtliness and the desire for fame.' Their first conscious European exponents, the writers who gave them a suit of clothes, were the Italians, Castiglione and Machiavelli. The one codified the rule of life for the courtier, *il Cortegiano*, and the other for the prince, *il Principe*. Each of these treatises, written in the sixteenth century, when the dream-world of the fourteenth had been invaded by problems of active conduct, exercised an immense influence which has proved almost permanent. The gentleman of the English convention, though he derives some traits from our landscape and seascape, still wears Castiglione's

coat, and, like Bismarck in an earlier generation, Mussolini and even Lenin have distinct Machiavellian features. But the ideas changed in their passage through the nations. A 'Court Guide' is no longer a guide to courtliness. Quixote was a *cortegiano*, who performed all the behoveful offices of a knight, but Cervantes, limping home from the Spanish war, wore Castiglione's coat with the seams outwards, and a gentleman's education to-day includes lessons on the decay of feudalism and chivalry. Indeed, the motor-car has ousted the *cheval*. The statesman, again, who should put in practice all the sage precepts which were to train the prince of Florence would not survive 'Peace pleading before Parliament.' The 'scrap of paper' doctrine, which is among them, did not survive the last war, and may haply be too much discredited for use in a future war, however urgent the function of 'nature's pruning-hook.' For these things change, however slowly, and there has been a development in this idea even since Acton wrote in 1891 :

'Machiavelli is the earliest conscious and articulate exponent of certain living forces in the present world. Religion, progressive enlightenment, the perpetual vigilance of public opinion, have not reduced his empire, or disputed the justice of his conception of mankind.'

His empire has surely been reduced by the consent of civilised nations, though we must still concur with Acton's grim conclusion :

'We find him near our common level, and perceive that he is not a vanishing type, but a constant and contemporary influence.'

But we no longer educate our rulers in its exercise.

May I turn to another cross-country word, even more difficult to follow through its shifting phases, but less soiled by admixture with politics? I am thinking of 'romance,' which has carried different meanings at different times, and which is used to-day in some senses remote from its original signification. Rome, of course, is at the root of it, as of the rest of the heritage of modern man, bequeathed by Petrarch to the humanists. But the true *civis Romanus* was romantic without knowing it. His vision of Rome, his imperial humility—

'tantae molis erat Romanam condere gentem,'—

his constructive purpose founded on an idea—

'tu regere imperio,' etc.—

were all essentially romantic in a widely accepted meaning of the term. They caused a thrill of wonder and admiration, a perception of size and distance, and they struck a note of contrast between man and his destiny, between time and timelessness. The mirage of the past, the enchantment of the future, were both in it. But the Roman was not romantic—not even in Virgil's undertones—except by a somewhat violent metaphor. For romance, as a name in a dictionary, is of post-pagan invention. In the wonderful Introduction to *The Myths of Plato*¹ by that sturdy octogenarian, Professor J. A. Stewart, he tells us that Transcendental Feeling is

'feeling which indeed appears in our ordinary object-distinguishing, time-marking consciousness, but does not originate in it. It is to be traced to the influence on consciousness of the presence in us of that "Part of the Soul" which holds on, in timeless sleep, to Life as worth living. Hence Transcendental Feeling is at once the solemn sense of Timeless Being and the conviction that Life is good.'

It does not matter much if we do not understand this. It is a poor kind of intellect which refuses belief to all that it cannot understand, and the post-pagan Romantics will translate it, if not intelligibly, at least poetically. The ancient Hebrews, by the way, were incurable Romantics. Even their cosmogony was saturated with romance. The reiterate 'good' which the Creator saw in his work, culminating in the 'very good' of the final section of it, was, of course, a message to his creatures, and let the influence of 'Life as worth living' steal in upon their consciousness in sleep. But romance, as a factor of the mind of Europe, is of indigenous growth, and arose when Rome was in decay. The *Oxford Dictionary* traces its first use to Henry More's *Immortality of the Soul*, 1659, and Mr. Pearsall Smith, commenting on this passage, reminds us that 'romantic means Nature seen through a literary medium.'² So it acquired, of course, literary rules, and, as happens so often when a legislature steps in with regulations, artificial conditions were superimposed. Literary history and criticism are full of the distinction between 'classical' and 'romantic,' between the classical atmosphere of form and the romantic atmosphere of matter, and the name 'Romantic' gradually acquired an artificial, technical, text-book meaning which set it apart. Thus distinguished, it crossed into England some time after it had been

¹ London, 1905.

² *Words and Idioms*, London, 1925.

adopted by the Germans, and its ceremonial introduction is said to be due to the *liaison* offices of Mme de Staël in 1813. A few years later Victor Hugo was rightly saying that the differences between the two schools were at bottom 'assez insignifiantes'; but criticism is so much more popular than its exhibits, that a learned German was found pleading in 1900 for the charity of 'an international league for the suppression of the terms Romanticism and Classicism.' Perhaps the authorities at Geneva will take note. For, though flowing hair, open collars and red waistcoats are no longer worn as badges of romance, it is still timely to recall the grave warning of Walter Pater:

'To discriminate schools of art, of literature, is, of course, part of the obvious business of literary criticism: but, in the work of literary production, it is easy to be overmuch occupied concerning them. For, in truth, the legitimate contention is, not of one age or school of literary art against another, but of all successive schools alike, against the stupidity which is dead to the substance, and the vulgarity which is dead to form.'

As in literature, so in other modes of expression. Beginnings and ends, schools and ages, and the like, are not blindly to be accepted as correct *data*. Specialists and pedants have too much to say in fixing them, and the names which they invent—perhaps even the name of death itself—are mere conveniences of time, and are always liable to revision by those who pursue what Plato called the longer road to truth. Nowhere in life do we meet an end, and never recognisably a beginning. For

'all experience is an arch wherethro'

Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.'

Even the war which was to end war has hardly brought an end to the call of armaments. We compress the Middle Ages into a cram-book, but we are still administering their estate. There were Reformers before the Reformation, adding Ullmann to Ranke. Nowhere a beginning, and nowhere an end; everywhere change, translation, evolution, and the return of man on his own tracks.

I mentioned Thackeray just now. No writer in CORNHILL can fail to mention him, least of all a writer *de finibus*. For Thackeray was a master of the 'finis.' They say—Mr. Michael Sadleir says it emphatically in his excellent *Bulwer: A Panorama*¹—that Thackeray was 'both a hypocrite and a snob . . . a snob who

¹ London, 1931.

worked an ostentatious anti-snobbery to death.' I am not discussing this charge, which depends on personal reminiscences, and the evidence for which is sometimes one-sided. But there was nothing either snobbish or mawkish in his work as a novelist, by which, after all, he should be judged. Mr. Anstey Guthrie, a keen observer, says somewhere that 'there is a kind of vulgarity of mind so subtle as to resist every test but ink,' and if Thackeray resists that acid test it strengthens the case for the defendant. Now, consider some death-scenes in *Vanity Fair*, primarily for their treatment of the 'finis,' and incidentally as written by an alleged snob. Miss Crawley, for example :

'The last scene of her dismal Vanity Fair comedy was fast approaching ; the tawdry lamps were going out one by one ; and the dark curtain was almost ready to descend.'

The old vulgarian was purified by death. Or John Sedley, before whom, as he lay dying, his life may have passed :

'a spent-out bootless life of defeat and disappointment, and the end here ! Which, I wonder, brother reader, is the better lot, to die prosperous and famous, or poor and disappointed ? To have, and to be forced to yield ; or to sink out of life, having played and lost the game ? . . . So there came one morning and sunrise, when all the world got up and set about its various works and pleasures with the exception of old John Sedley, who was not to fight with fortune, or to hope or scheme any more ; but to go and take up a quiet and utterly unknown residence in a churchyard at Brompton by the side of his old wife.'

'Ostentatious anti-snobbery,' do they say ? It is a far-fetched epithet for sentiment so homely. And George Osborne, at Waterloo :

'Darkness came down on the field and city : and Amelia was praying for George, who was lying on his face, dead, with a bullet through his heart.'

Novelists of the Great War have not exercised so fine a parsimony.

There are some elaborate finales, of course. Gibbon's conclusion to the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, which so much edified the Golden Dustman, has rarely been surpassed :

'It was among the ruins of the Capitol that I first conceived the idea of a work which has amused and exercised near twenty years of my life, and which, however inadequate to my own wishes, I finally deliver to the curiosity and candour of the Public.'

And the later historian of *The Holy Roman Empire* supplies us with an interesting study of a series or chord of finales. Bryce closed his book in 1864 with the following reflection for succeeding generations :

'The Empire which to us still looms largely on the horizon of the past, will to them sink lower and lower as they journey onwards into the future. But its importance in universal history it can never lose. For into it all the life of the ancient world was gathered : out of it all the life of the modern world arose.'

In 1873 he added a chapter tracing the growth of national sentiment in Germany, and in 1904 he reviewed the story of the new German Empire, remarking at the end :

'Old wrongs were redressed ; old problems solved. The world seemed to have closed one page in its history, and then paused to wonder and conjecture what the next might have to unfold.'

And then, in an Epilogue :

'That which the next page did unfold proved different from what men had expected . . .'

and so to a new conclusion.

One word, with virtue to end ends, will help us out of this tangle. True, it is a literary term, and, as such, subject to artifice. But behind its artificial use lies a real perception and a constant meaning, which goes some way to explain the lack of finality to 'finis.' *That which the next page did unfold proved different from what men had expected.* Politicians and historians, even statesmen and prophets, might ponder this third conclusion to Bryce's *Holy Roman Empire* ; and, so pondering, they may take account of the odd and elf-like little word, 'irony.' It has, of course, nothing to do with 'iron' ; it is one of the minor tragedies of the English language that these two flowers from different roots should look alike. Irony is of pure Greek descent, and would make as good a girl's name as Irene, Sophia, Anthony Hope's Euphrosyne (Phroso), and others. I wonder it has never been used, for irony possesses a puckish charm, an element of surprise and unexpectedness, which suggests the woman who *souvent varie*. The famous irony of Greek drama depended on a stage convention. The actors were supposed not to know the end into which the plot was being unravelled. But the spectators knew it, because the plots of classical Greek dramas were taken from the common stock of national legend. So speeches, questions, even words, might carry

a double value. On the stage they meant what they said ; to the audience they meant that, and more. For the onlooker or reader knew what the playwright was getting at. He entered into two minds at once, the playwright's and the actor's, and the deeper the actor got involved in the mess, the stronger was that sense of double understanding. The spectator swelled to creator's size. The irony of the situation lay in the privy of A to an end hidden from B.

Socrates improved this weapon and applied it to forensic uses. With an engaging pretence of seeking information, he asked questions designed to convict his opponent of ignorance. That is to say, he knew the answers ; and, when irony passed into the keeping of the rhetoricians of modern Europe, they, too, knew the answers. They extended the use of irony from the stage and the forum to pure philosophy. Particularly, the German Romantics, to whom we referred above, with Friedrich Schlegel at their head, and with Novalis as a close runner-up, used it to illustrate Fichte's doctrine of the *Ego* and *non-Ego*, of the Inner and Outer, in their conflict and relationship. Napoleon was dominating Europe—the absolute swallowing the individual ; and, while Fichte, as patriot, was addressing the German nation and urging them to resist the foreign yoke, Fichte, as philosopher, was supplying the argument of Individualism *versus* Absolutism to the schoolmen of Romance. Every man should be his own Napoleon, moulding his Outer to his Inner, his *non-Ego* to his *Ego* ; and so there came the line of conscious individualists, the apprentices to the conduct of life. *Bis zur Ironie*—to the breaking-point of irony—they drove their storming individualism, till the artist's castle was borne down by the unimpressed world without. Hans Andersen, Sir James Barrie and Pirandello are masters of irony in this kind.

So I end, as I began, with Thackeray. He created a world of living people, enough to people a village. He took them to London, and Hampshire, and Brussels in the war. He married them, buried them, and made them drunk with love and wine. We know the colour of their eyes, their turns of speech, their secret sins. And, at last, he strapped his pack, and snapped the lock, and said :

‘Come, children, let us shut up the box and the puppets, for our play is played out.’

Player and playthings make their bow together, and the ‘divine comedy’ goes on.

LAURIE MAGNUS.

LITERARY ACROSTICS.

A LITERARY Acrostic is published every month, and the Editor of THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE offers two prizes to the most successful solvers. The winners will be entitled to choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue. If several solvers send solutions of equal merit, the two whose answers are opened first will win the prizes.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 97.

'Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,
 ———, ———, uncles, cousins,
 Cocking tails and pricking whiskers,
 Families by tens and dozens.'

1. 'Under the keel nine ——— deep,
 From the land of mist and snow.'
2. 'And what is life, that we should moan? why
 make we such ———?'
3. 'The ——— that from the soul doth rise,
 Doth ask a drink divine.'
4. 'For them no more the blazing ——— shall burn,
 Or busy housewife ply her evening care.'
5. 'But when I came to man's ———,
 With hey, ho, the wind and the rain;
 'Gainst knaves and thieves men shut their gate,
 For the rain it raineth every day.'
6. 'I ———, I ———,
 The house where I was born,
 The little window where the sun
 Came peeping in at morn.'
7. 'This same flower that ——— to-day,
 To-morrow will be dying.'

RULES.

1. Only one answer may be sent to each light.
2. Every correct light and upright will score one point.
3. With his answer every solver must send the coupon that is printed on page viii of 'Book Notes' in the preliminary pages of this issue: and he must be careful to give also his real name and address.
4. Solvers should not write either the quotations or the references on the same paper as their answers. It is not necessary, or even desirable, to send them at all.
5. Solvers who write a second letter, to correct a previous answer, must send the complete solution as they wish it, and not merely state the desired alteration.
6. Answers to Acrostic No. 97 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE, 50 Albemarle Street, London, W.1, and must arrive not later than September 19. No answers will be opened before this date.

ANSWER TO NO. 96.

1. S	oa	P
2. T	e	A
3. A	i	R
4. G	rea	T
5. E	gg	S

PROEM: Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, ii, 7.

LIGHTS:

1. Barham, *Ingoldsby Legends*. *The Jackdaw of Rheims*.
2. Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass*, ch. 9.
3. Shakespeare, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, ii, 1.
4. Macaulay, *Lays of Ancient Rome*. *Horatius*, xxxii.
5. Calverley, *Fly Leaves*, *Ballad*.

Acrostic No. 95 ('Smack Round'): The first two answers that were opened and found to be correct came from Miss E. S. Franey, The Grange, Ely, Cambridgeshire, and Major Holland, Country Side, Bourne End, Bucks. These two solvers will choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue.

